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ON HIS POETIC PROWESS

REVIEWED: GREENFIELD GF

ARE WE IN THE GOLDEN AGE OF GUITAR MAKING?

ISSUE 107 JULY 2015 UK £4.95



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Photo: Deanna Montalban

Nashville thought Hank Williams was trouble.
Here's his partner in crime.



Whether writing legendary songs or becoming country music's original outlaw, Hank Williams always had a Martin by his side.

To find your guitar for life, visit a Martin Dealer: www.quickfind.me/martin.



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Issue 107 July 2015

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A LITTLE WORD

People will always question value for money – it's in our nature – but, fundamentally, it operates on many different levels and means something different to each and every one of us. Is a £10k guitar two times better than a £5k guitar? Luthier-crafted guitars are valued for what they represent to not just the customer, but to the craftsman. To you and me, it may be the culmination of many years of yearning for that coveted *objet d'art*, but to the craftsman it represents a slice of his or her life. Stephen Bennett sets a fitting analogy over on page 44 as he reviews the Greenfield GF from The North American Guitar. Give the ordinary bloke in the street a kitchen full of the finest ingredients (read: tonewoods) and he won't necessarily produce a gourmet banquet. "Only a proper chef can blend those ingredients into something this tasty," he ascertains. We wouldn't grumble at a violin costing £10k, right? So why should we a guitar...

The GF was developed to address the need for a performance level, moderately priced Greenfield guitar. Production is limited and even though the GF is handcrafted in Michael Greenfield's Montréal workshop, he doesn't label it as a custom order instrument. It is built with the same carefully selected materials, skilled craftsmanship and attention to detail he has built his reputation on, but the GF is fashioned with elegant, understated appointments and aims to deliver that legendary, piano-like Greenfield tone. Greenfield says that it "is perfect for the aficionado who appreciates a performance-level, luthier-built instrument without the

more ornate appointments and complex options available on my other models."

As we guitarists evolve, play, and get better, we become aware of the sound we want, and we become more accustomed to what a guitar is capable of. The purchasing of a luthier-crafted guitar becomes a natural progression for the serious guitarist. More than anything, coveting a luthier-crafted guitar is due to the perennial quest for the best. Once you've heard the sound of an instrument built with the kind of love as Michael Greenfield's instruments, you develop a taste for the extraordinary – and nothing is ever the same after that.

Being a guitar player is a progressive experience. You need to learn on a Volvo to really appreciate a Ferrari – but, eventually, you are going to want that Ferrari (read: Custom Shop C.F. Martin & Co., Greenfield, de Jonge, Collings, Patrick James Eggle, 900 Series Taylor – you get the picture).

Sadly, this issue marks the departure of the esteemed David Mead. David has contributed to *Acoustic* for nine years and so I thank him for his continued enthusiasm toward our magazine. That means there's a gap to fill in the ranks here at Acoustic Towers – and I can't think of anyone better than the distinguished fingerstyle master Tony McManus. Tony joins us from issue 109. We'll see you there.

Guy Little
Editor

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SUBSCRIPTION DETAILS ON PAGE 42

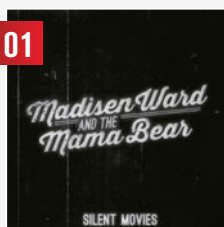




ACOUSTIC Presents...

15 TRACKS
OF THE MONTH'S
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01

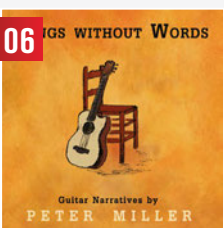


MADISEN WARD AND THE MAMA BEAR - 'SILENT MOVIES'

At home, Madisen and Ruth Ward are family members. Onstage, they're the leading members of Madisen Ward And The Mama Bear, a soulful folk band whose sound is anchored by twin guitars and two big, booming voices. The duo took the scene by storm this year with appearances on BBC *Breakfast*, *Later... with Jools Holland* and *Late Night with David Letterman*. *Skeleton Crew* the debut album out now, was produced by Jim Abbiss, known for his award-winning work with Arctic Monkeys and Adele. See them this fall on tour with Sufjan Stevens.

- www.madisenwardandthemamabear.com
- www.facebook.com/madisenwardandthemamabear
- @madisenwardmb

06



PETER MILLER - 'PLUIE DU SOIR'

Award-winning Australian guitarist Peter Miller has toured his homeland and the EU extensively - in

particular, Ireland, where his Celtic flavoured fingerstyle guitar playing has found a home, something which Miller will not complain about. 'I love playing concerts in Ireland and other parts of the EU, I feel at home on the Road,' says Miller. He uses both standard and alternate tunings, has recorded several albums and has had his music appear on film and TV worldwide. 'Peter Miller has just about the finest touch I've ever heard on acoustic guitar.' - Richard Gilowitz, USA.

- www.peter-miller.com
- www.facebook.com/PeterMillerMusic
- @PmillerMusic

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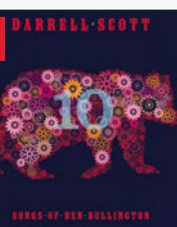
G.D. SWEENEY - 'DEVIL IN MY WINE'

Heralding from a culture of storytelling and a rich musical heritage, G.D. Sweeney has combined his love of bluegrass,

folk melodies and classic country with his proud Irish roots, to create a musical alchemy he calls "Celtic country". This new-traditional style is the musical backdrop to the intriguing narratives and characters in his songs. Sweeney has recently released his debut album, *The Truth About Lies*. Captivating alcohol-stained tales of regret, deceit and redemption, are rendered with the wit and wisdom of Ireland, the yearning of old-fashioned American country and the dark wistful tones of European folk music.

- www.GDSweeney.com
- www.facebook.com/GDSweeneyCC
- @GDSweeneyCC

02



DARRELL SCOTT - 'I'M TALKING TO YOU'

Darrell Scott is an American singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist. He has

collaborated with Robert Plant, Zac Brown, Steve Earle, Sam Bush, Emmylou Harris, John Cowan, Verlon Thompson, Guy Clark, Tim O'Brien and many others. His unique music has attracted a growing fanbase. Much of the commentary about Darrell Scott's career has focused on the songs he's written that have been recorded by famous names and voices - those known in music industry parlance as "artists." But then there's the actual word "artist." We refer to those who create artifacts of aesthetic and intellectual contemplation and wonder, built from experience, skill, reflection and emotional intent. That's an artist. And that, is Darrell Scott.

- www.darrellscott.com
- www.facebook.com/darrellscott
- @darrellscott

07



JOSH TAERK - 'HERE'S TO CHANGE'

24-year-old Canadian Josh Taerk releases his *Here's To Change* album inspired by artists like

Bruce Springsteen, Tom Petty and Neil Young. It was recorded with Josh and the band playing live off the floor in Nashville, Tennessee, with a 24-track analog recording desk. Friend and mentor John Oates (rock & roll hall of famer, Hall & Oates) introduced Josh to producer Teddy Morgan and sang background vocals on the title track as well as 'Wise Man'. Oates says "I've enjoyed getting to know Josh Taerk and his music over the last few years... I think it is Josh's best work to date."

- www.joshtaerk.com
- www.facebook.com/joshtaerk
- @joshtaerk

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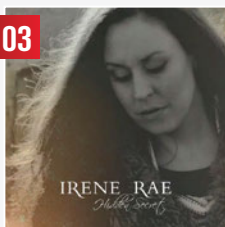
TELLING THE BEES - 'WINDFLOWER'

Telling the Bees are an innovative acoustic band making a unique and original music they call "darkly crafted folk". They met

in 2007 at Oxford's legendary Catweazle Club, and have released two albums, *Untie the Wind* and *An English Arcanum*. In 2011, they expanded to the current five-piece line-up and their third album *Steer by The Stars* has just been released. Taking their inspiration from folklore, landscape, psychedelia, paganism, and the politics of protest, Telling The Bees mix driving songs and tune-sets with haunting ballads. Intelligent lyrics, exotic rhythms, and instruments as varied as fiddle, mandolin, cello, double bass, concertina, stomp box and English bagpipes are brought together in skillful arrangements, wild at times, gentle at others.

- www.tellingthebees.co.uk
- www.facebook.com/tellingthebees
- @tellingbees

03



IRENE RAE – 'SEE ME FOR ME'

'See Me For Me', the first single taken from the forthcoming EP *Hidden Secret* witnesses Irene

Rae's return to the studio after a four-year break from her previous solo career which caught the attention of Midge Ure and Hazel O'Connor. Her style and lyrics, while remaining uniquely her own, have been compared to the likes of Nora Jones and Natalie Merchant. "Perfect for listening to on a summer's evening, drinking fine wine..."

■ www.irenerae.com
 ■ www.facebook.com/ireneraemusic
 ■ @irenerae

04



JENNIFER CROOK TRIO – 'LONG DRIVE BACK HOME FROM LOVE'

In a career that has led her from the BBC young tradition

award to touring with Snow Patrol, Jennifer has earned a reputation as an outstanding lever harp player as well as an acclaimed singer-songwriter, composer and multi-instrumentalist. Jennifer's latest release was produced and mixed at Peter Gabriel's Real World Studios by Stephen W Taylor (Kate Bush, Suzanne Vega, Stevie Nicks), following a "very impressive" (Pledge Music) crowd-funding campaign. Carnforth Station also features cellist Beth Porter and multi-instrumentalist Mike Cosgrave, premier lap steel player Kevin Brown and singer/double bassist Miranda Sykes (Show of Hands).

■ www.jennifercrook.com
 ■ www.facebook.com/jennifercrookmusic.com
 ■ @jennifer_crook

05



CALAN – 'TALE OF TWO DRAGONS'

Fiddles, guitar, accordion, bagpipes and step dancing explode into life as Calan perform songs and tunes

from their new album *Dinas*. Infectious guitar rhythms and high voltage routines give way to beautiful and haunting songs as they tour throughout 2015 to celebrate their latest release. Among the traditional Welsh melodies and brand new original material, they breathe fire into the folk tale of 'Merlin And The Two Dragons' – a song released as a single that tells the story of why there is a dragon on the Welsh flag.

■ www.calan-band.com
 ■ www.facebook.com/calanfolk
 ■ @calanfolk

08



MAWKIN – 'SEARCHING FOR LAMBS'

One of Brit-folk's brightest new guns: a blistering five-piece band fusing folk, blues and rock. On the cutting edge

of the contemporary music scene with all the verve and mystique of ancient folk music traditions from across the globe. Rousing songs of rebellion are sung by brothers David Delarre (Eliza Carthy, Tred) and fiddler James Delarre (Saul Rose & James Delarre, Topette) all underpinned by the virtuosic bellowing of Nick Cooke's melodeon (Kate Rusby, Jim Moray) and a solid rhythm section with Danny Crump on bass and Lee Richardson (Diverted, Extreme Music) on drums.

■ www.mawkin.co.uk
 ■ www.facebook.com/thisismawkin
 ■ @therealmawkin

09



STEWART MAC & DEAN ROBERTS – 'WE ARE'

Stewart Mac is a singer, songwriter and guitarist from North London.

Specialising in radio-friendly, heartfelt rock songs, he has released two previous full-length albums, achieved success in Asia and has a string of live performances under his belt alongside such greats as Bon Jovi, who he opened for at Twickenham Stadium. He has just released a brand new EP *Radio*, which was written and recorded with long time collaborator and live guitarist Dean Roberts.

■ www.stewart-mac.com
 ■ www.facebook.com/stewartmacmusic
 ■ @stewartmacmusic

10



SHOOGLENIFTY – 'THE UNTIED KNOT'

Shooglenifty's sound springs from traditional Scottish dance music, energised by the beats and bass line of

something altogether more contemporary. It is not a sit-down kind of music, it's a join-in, and get on your feet kind of vibe. Attempts to describe this almost uncategorisable band include: "hypno-folkadelic-ambient-trad" and "acid-croft." *The Untied Knot* is the band's seventh studio album and the first feature a collection of songs. The breathtaking "puirt a beul" (mouth music) of Gaelic vocalist Kaela Rowan brings a captivating and energising new element to the band's sound, and further confounds any attempt to pigeonhole them.

■ www.shooglenifty.com
 ■ www.facebook.com/shooglenifty.scotland
 ■ @shooglegigs

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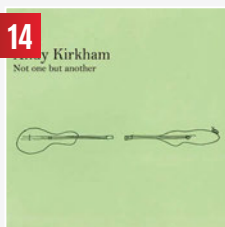
THE RAILSPLITTERS – 'TILT A WHIRL'

From their home in the Colorado Rockies, The Railsplitters have been scaling new heights with a

refreshing and charming range of bluegrass and beyond-bluegrass music. For a debut album, The Railsplitters sound remarkably assured, playing with the kind of abandon their live shows are known for. Bringing real depth and formidable talent, this group draws influences from all the greats – think Bill Monroe and Earl Scruggs to modern groups like Uncle Earl and Crooked Still. Using powerful female and male vocals, enchanting harmonies, and masterful instrumentals, The Railsplitters have the kind of raw power that can raise mountains and even a few eyebrows.

■ www.therailsplitters.com
 ■ www.facebook.com/therailsplittersbluegrass
 ■ @trailsplitters

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ANDY KIRKHAM – 'TRAVELLING SONG'

Acoustic guitarist Andy Kirkham is a fine fingerpicker who has explored many guitar styles

including traditional West African and Kora music, Eastern European and folk. These styles he brings to his new album *Not One But Another* – a collection of heart-warming songs and tunes accompanied by beautiful acoustic guitar playing. Here, inspiration has come from diverse subjects such as Margaret Thatcher's funeral, a daughter growing up, a fish and a set of hills, while influences of Ali Farka Toure, Richard Thompson and John Williams combine to create intricate and uplifting guitar music.

■ www.andykirkham.com
 ■ www.facebook.com/andykirkham2

15



ROBIN HUW BOWEN – 'NEW GYPSY HORNPIPES'

Robin Huw Bowen "master of the Welsh triple harp" releases his new album *The Language Of The Soul*.

Since 1983, Robin Huw Bowen has introduced the Welsh triple harp and its music to thousands all over the world. As the only full-time professional Welsh harpist specialising solely in the Welsh triple harp, his influence on the world of Welsh folk music and harping has been far-reaching. He ranks among the most important figures that the Welsh folk tradition has produced and Sain Records are proud to release his latest album *The Language Of The Soul* – his fourth recording for the label.

■ www.teires.tth7.co.uk

36 FATHER JOHN MISTY

He's been a solo folkster, a drummer with Fleet Foxes, and a drug-addled heavy drinker. Now, as Father John Misty, he levels with *Acoustic* about the eternal truths on the beguiling *I Love You, Honeybear* - the transformative epic where Joshua Tillman ends and Father John Misty begins...



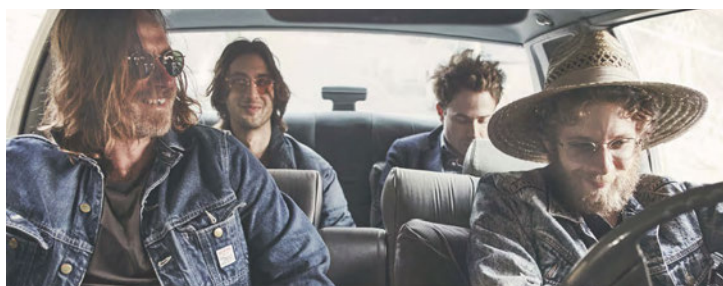
18 JOHN AND JACOB

John & Jacob are an enigma. Firstly, there are five of them, most of whom are not called John or Jacob; secondly, though they are from Nashville, and have often been seen in what we might consider country musician's attire, their style is very eclectic, drawing more on pop and late 50s / early 60s music than on country in many songs. *Acoustic* spent some time chatting to John Davidson.



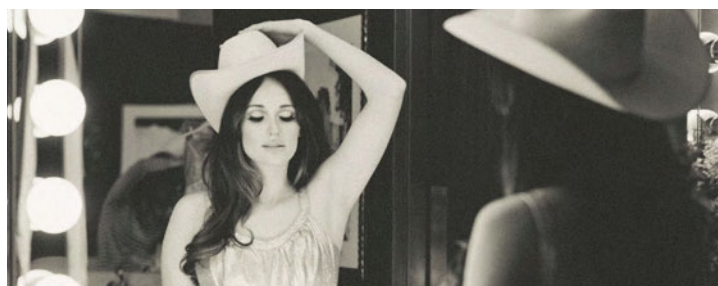
22 HOWE GELB

Giant Sand, the iconic band fronted by luminary Howe Gelb, celebrates 30 years of freewheeling and ever-evolving music making on new album, *Heartbreak Pass*. Julian Piper talks to Gelb about finding musical bliss in the Arizona desert, blues guitar legends, and his love affair with Europe.



26 DAWES

Taylor and Griffin Goldsmith's band, Dawes, has been compared to the great Laurel Canyon bands of the 60s and 70s until they're sick of the comparison - and it's not surprising, given the sun-drenched, harmony laden nature of their classic sound. Seven years into their career, Dawes are touring in support of their most recent album *All Your Favourite Bands*.



32 KACEY MUSGRAVES

The whip-smart Grammy winner tells Julian Piper about how writing fiercely witty songs to challenge the norm in small town USA was never the intention...

GUITAR TECHNIQUES

Improve your playing with our techniques section...

With 12 pages of different level-specific techniques, whether you're a novice or an expert our columns have something for everyone.

THE EXPERTS

92 CLIVE CARROLL

A classic ragtime piano tune arranged for six-string guitar by Clive Carroll

94 LEON HUNT

Using spaces between notes and dynamic emphasis on specific beats

96 DANIEL HO

Creating unique rhythms on the ukulele

98 THOMAS LEEB

Standard tuning from Thomas Leeb? Yep – have at it with this tune from *Trickster*

100 DAVID MEAD

Discovering DADGAD – 'Almost Lost At Sea'

102 CHRIS WOODS

Effective harmonic lead playing on the acoustic

SPECIAL FEATURES



78 THE WORKSHOP: KINKEAD GUITARS

Jonny Kinkead of Kinkade Guitars ranks among the most prestigious guitar makers in the UK, building a small amount of flat top guitars from his Bristol workshop.

84 BRIAN WILSON'S LOVE AND MERCY

Following the premiere of Brian Wilson's biopic *Love And Mercy*, we look at the life of an enduring music icon through the eyes of John Anderson – a video producer and director who has worked with Wilson for nearly 20 years – humanising a larger-than-life and often misunderstood artist, while offering an insight as to why his music touches so many people.

82 12-STRING CORNER

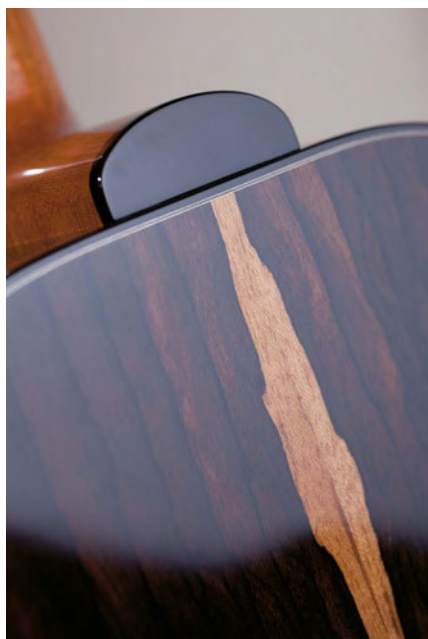
Mastering fingerstyle techniques on a 12-string with Paul Brett

88 IN THE LOOP

Making the most of reverse guitar parts – those that remind us of the great 60s records like the Beatles' 'Tomorrow Never Knows' and Hendrix's reversed solos on *Axis: Bold As Love*.

GEAR REVIEWS

Acoustic keeps you up to date with what's hot and what's not in our gear reviews section.



44 GREENFIELD GF

Stephen Bennett take on a behemoth of the acoustic world – a Greenfield GF from famed Canadian luthier Michael Greenfield.

52 YAMAHA SILENT GUITARS

David Mead explores the sound of silence with these two forward-thinking guitars.

58 TAYLOR 214CE DLX

Alun Lower gets to grips with a relatively entry level Taylor with bags of high-end appeal and the new Expression System 2.

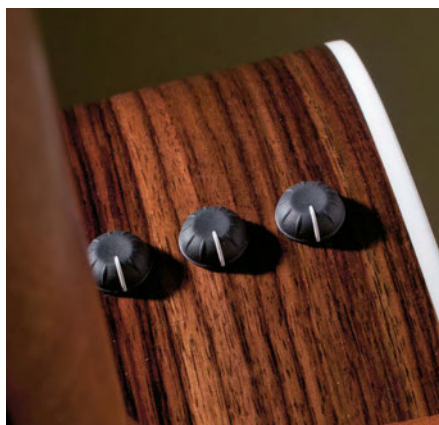
64 TANGLEWOOD TN5

SUPER FOLK

An electro acoustic plus case for under £350? David Mead has the details...

70 SIGMA UKULELES

Sigma has launched a range of Martin lookalike ukuleles, but does their history with the Nazareth icon have any meaning here? Sam Wise finds out.



NEWS DESK

ACOUSTIC BRINGS YOU ALL OF THE LATEST PRODUCTS AND NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF ACOUSTIC MUSIC.

TC ELECTRONIC INTRODUCES THE POLYTUNE CLIP-ON TUNER

The Danish guitar tech company has produced the world's first polyphonic clip-on guitar tuner retailing for £35



TC Electronic has set the bar for modern tuning technology with the PolyTune Clip, and this time they've set it higher than ever! Not only have they managed to distill their game-changing polyphonic tuning technology into its smallest enclosure to date, they've actually improved

it while doing so, making PolyTune Clip their best polyphonic tuner yet.

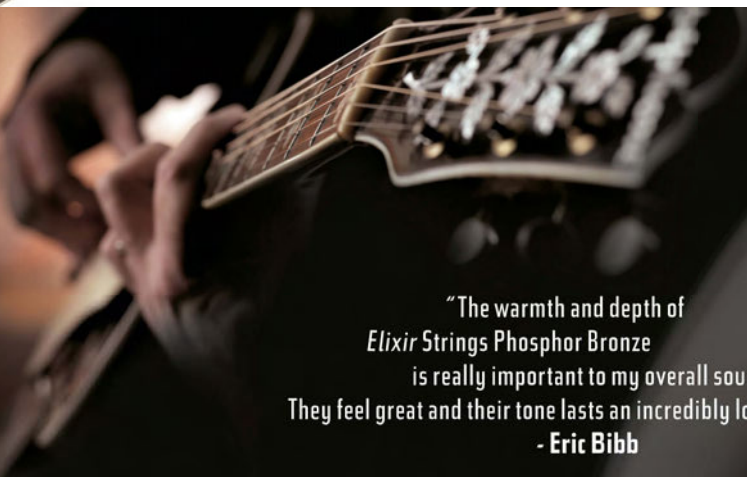
Now add to the mix a blindingly fast and accurate chromatic tuner, a strobe tuner mode with an unprecedented ± 0.02 cent pin-point precision and there's no doubt that PolyTune Clip is sure to satisfy everyone from the casual bedroom player to the hardened gigging pro.

The PolyTune Clip also features an ultra-bright adaptive display that automatically detects if all strings are strummed at once or if individual notes are plucked. It also automatically flips the screen

to guarantee a perfect readout no matter where it's placed on the headstock. All of these futuristic features are housed in a small, elegant yet durable design with a high-end stainless steel clip that ensures that PolyTune Clip stays locked-in, even under the harshest gigging conditions.

Features include: polyphonic tuning technology, chromatic tuner (± 0.5 cent), new ultra-precise strobe tuner (± 0.02 cent), ultra-bright and easy to read display, adaptive screen, elegant design and high-quality stainless steel clip.

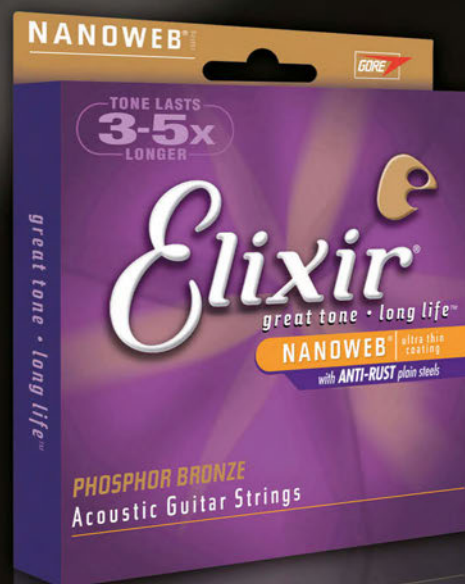
The TC Electronic PolyTune Clip will retail at £35. For more information, visit their website. www.tcelectronic.com



"The warmth and depth of Elixir Strings Phosphor Bronze is really important to my overall sound. They feel great and their tone lasts an incredibly long time."
- Eric Bibb



www.elixirstrings.co.uk/products



RONNIE SCOTT'S LAUNCHES ITS FIRST MUSIC INSTRUMENT AMNESTY

Unused instruments to be donated to young aspiring musicians both in the UK and abroad

On Saturday July 11, Ronnie Scott's will be holding a music instrument amnesty to collect unused music instruments and donating them to school aged children in the UK and overseas. The amnesty is organised in association with Sistema England and Music Fund.

Donated instruments will be given new life in the hands of children and young people participating in ambitious "social action through music" projects in targeted communities in England and abroad.

Sistema England, founded by Julian Lloyd Webber, seeks to transform the lives of children, young people and their communities through the power of music making. It is part of an international movement inspired by El Sistema, the Venezuelan programme that benefits street kids through the creation of grass roots orchestras.

It's an initiative that is especially dear to Ronnie Scott's managing director Simon Cooke who said, 'We at Ronnie's are really pleased to lead this drive helping schools and education projects at home and around the world. Our standing in the jazz world puts us in a great position to ask musicians, our members and the public at large to help us help underprivileged kids by donating their unloved or used music instruments on July 11. This is the first of a few new charitable initiatives that the club will be embarking upon.'

For more information, and to donate an instrument, visit: www.ronniescotts.co.uk

BOUTIQUE IN BERLIN HOLY GRAIL GUITAR SHOW RETURNS

The international luthier showcase is back on October 31 & November 1 2015

What happens when a bunch of the world's greatest guitar builders decide to put on a show? The Holy Grail Guitar Show, that's what. In spring of 2014, a band of international guitar builders got together to put on a one-of-a-kind guitar show. By November 2014, The Holy Grail Guitar Show opened with 115 of the world's greatest luthiers in one room creating "a new gold standard for boutique guitar shows worldwide".

Now, the Holy Grail Guitar Show is back and will be held at the Estrel Hotel, Berlin, Germany on October 31 & November 1. Like last year, Holy Grail 2015 will be a luthier-driven showcase for the highest quality handbuilt guitars. The show itself is devised as a non-profit-making event with the intention of providing an affordable cooperation platform for the attending luthiers and funding for the European Guitar Builders Association (EGB) - the organisers of the show.

Visitors can meet and talk to the guitar builders, and of course try out their guitars in well-equipped demo booths. The show is complemented with a full programme of showcase mini-concerts featuring endorsing artists performing on instruments by individual luthiers. There will also be an accompanying series of talks on different topics about the guitar by international experts. The full concert and lecture program will be published over the course of the summer.

Exhibiting luthiers come from as far afield as Japan, Finland, the Island of

Réunion in the Indian Ocean, Argentina and of course the United Kingdom, all adding to the truly international flair of the event. Check out their website for a full exhibitor list. Holy Grail Guitar Show 2015: the only international boutique guitar show for and by high-end guitar makers.

For more information, and to buy tickets to the 2015 show, visit their website.

www.holygrailguitarshow.com



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BANJO COMPANY

If you want to win the Shackleton Three, courtesy of The Great British Banjo Company, all you have to do is answer the following question correctly! Couldn't be easier. If you need a hint, head over to www.greatbritishbanjocompany.com

In which English city is the Shackleton Banjo factory located?

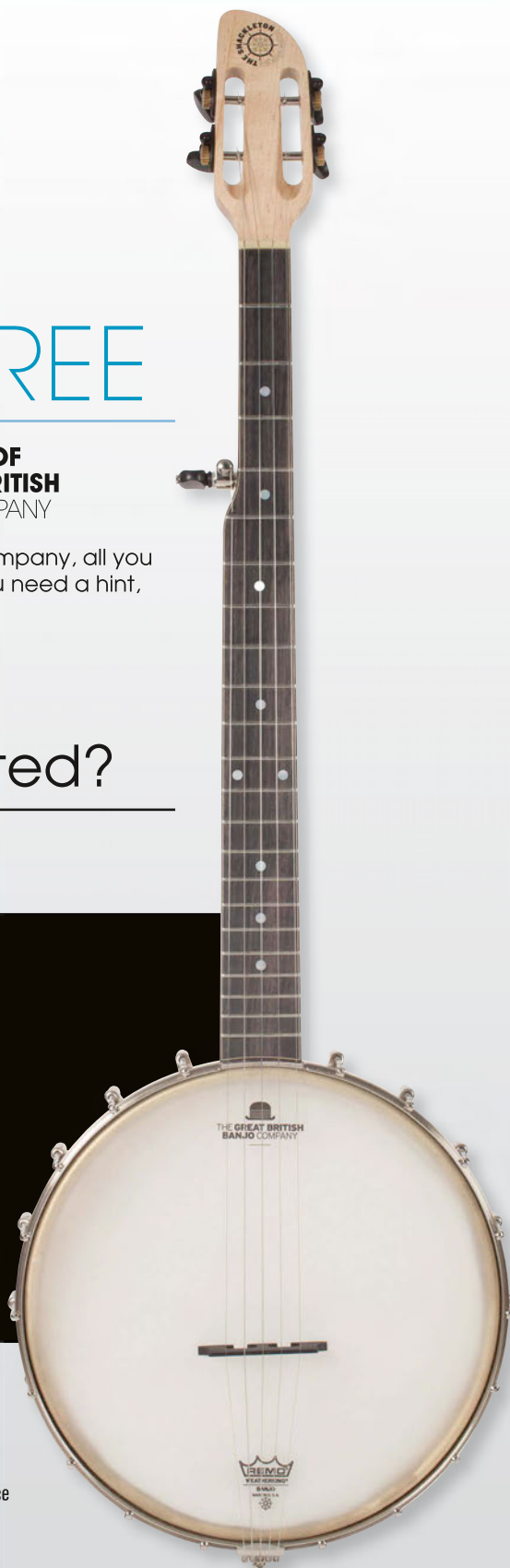
A Winchester **B** York **C** Norwich



*Great British
Instruments*

"The Shackleton is a great companion – its voice is crisp and precise with a lot of tonal variation on hand, just by adjusting your picking position. Played close to the bridge the tone is bright, lively and snappy with a considerable amount of volume. If 1920s-style banjo strumming a little further back is your thing, then it's present here in abundance, too. If you happen to be the type of person who would call a banjo "gorgeous" then I think we have a contender." – David Mead, *Acoustic Magazine*.

The Shackleton banjo re-launched a British industry – the first production banjo to be manufactured in Britain for more than 60 years. Now the Shackleton Three takes the Shackleton concept to a new level, to give you the finest handmade British banjo you can buy for under £1,000. Designed and built in Britain's only banjo factory, and crafted to sound as good as it looks and feels, The Shackleton Three is, as Ernest Shackleton himself described the banjo: "vital mental medicine."



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POST: Complete the form, below, tear off and send *FAO Acoustic magazine* / *Shackleton Comp* to *Blaze Publishing, Lawrence House, Morrell Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 5SZ*.

Closing date for the competition is 30 July 2015. The winner will be announced 31 July 2015.

*Required details to enter the competition

Answer*

Name* DOB*

Address*

Email* Tel. No.*

Do you subscribe to *Acoustic Magazine*?* Yes ☐ No ☐ Do you buy/subscribe to another publication? Yes ☐ No ☐ If Yes which publication?

Please tick if you do not want to hear from *Acoustic Magazine* or the *London Acoustic Show* ☐

*Competition entries must arrive no later than the closing date specified. The winner will be announced on 31 July 2015. Only the winner will be contacted. One entry per household. Image(s) of winner may be used for future editorial or advertising purposes. The winner will be selected at random from all the correct entries. No cash alternative is offered. *Acoustic magazine* reserves the right to substitute the prize for an alternative of equal or greater value.



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Acoustic
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"Its like attending your own private acoustic guitar festival. Trevor offers the world's best guitars." Linda Manzer.

"TAMCO has one of the best collections of handmade guitars on the planet". Ervin Somogyi.

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6 String Acoustics



13028 - Alkin 'The Forty Three' J45
13027 - Alkin AA Deluxe Custom OOO Walnut
13022 - Alkin OO AM Special Parlor Guitar
13578 - BSG J10F Jumbo Electro Acoustic, Used
14197 - Breedlove Discovery Concert Left-handed
13367 - Brook Lyn 12 Fret Handmade Guitar
13189 - Brook Tamar Handmade Jumbo Handmade
13188 - Brook Taw OM Size Handmade Guitar
13366 - Brook Teign Dreadnought Handmade Guitar
13906 - Cort AD8100P AD Series Acoustic Guitar
13909 - Cort AD840 CF OP Electro Acoustic
14332 - Cort AP510 NS Acoustic Guitar
13917 - Cort Earth 100R Natural Acoustic Guitar
4612 - Dave King Katrina OOO Model, Sunburst
4613 - Dave King Louise, Koa, Parlor, Natural
4770 - EKO Ranger Vintage Acoustic, Natural
13544 - Eko Oliveira Pignoli Ltd Edition Acoustic
13847 - Eko Ranger 6 VR Fastlok, Vint. SB Gloss
13850 - Eko TRI 018 Honey Burst
13851 - Eko TRI 018 Natural
13552 - Eko Vintage Ranger 6 in Black, Reissue
14246 - Faith Jupiter Jumbo, Secondhand
6975 - Fender CD60, Black
5096 - Fender CD60, Natural
5079 - Fender CD60, Sunburst
10245 - Fender CD60 Acoustic Guitar, Mahogany
14304 - Fender Starcaster Acoustic Guitar Pack
6142 - Gibson Hummingbird in Sunburst
13213 - Gibson J185 Acoustic Guitar, Secondhand
7090 - K Yairi New Yorker NY0021B, Natural
13614 - K Yairi YT1 Acoustic Guitar
7970 - LAG T300D Dreadnought, Satin Finish
12652 - Lakewood D14 Dreadnought Acoustic Guitar
9184 - Lakewood D18 Dreadnought, Natural
12649 - Lakewood M14 Grand Concert
12655 - Lakewood M18 Grand Concert
13386 - Landola D85 Dreadnought Acoustic, Used
8308 - Levin SW203 Acoustic Guitar in Black
8310 - Levin SW203 Acoustic Guitar in Natural
14127 - Luna Vista Mustang Electro Acoustic
5702 - Martin D28 Dreadnought, Natural
7115 - Martin LX1 Little Martin
6010 - Martin 00028EC Eric Clapton, Natural
13581 - Martin SW0MGT Orchestra Shape, Used
9342 - Northwood M80 12
11149 - Seagull Excursion Natural Folk SG
11148 - Seagull Excursion Natural Grand SG
11162 - Seagull Maritime SWS Mahogany High-Gloss
10230 - Seagull S6 Original
14259 - Takamine GD93S Acoustic Guitar, Natural
13291 - Tanglewood TPEFLS
9587 - Tanglewood TSJ XFM Super Jumbo
14061 - Tanglewood TW130 SM Orchestra Shape
7988 - Tanglewood TW133
9570 - Tanglewood TW40 DAN Dreadnought
14110 - Taylor 110 Acoustic Guitar, Secondhand
13910 - The Cort AF510OP Acoustic Folk Guitar
13081 - Vintage V2000MGG Acoustic Guitar
13269 - Vintage V400CSB, Cherry Sunburst
13270 - Vintage V400MP Maple Acoustic Guitar
10929 - Vintage VE2000DLX Gordon Giltrap
13272 - Vintage VJ100N XL Jumbo Series, Natural
8304 - Westcoast SW201 Acoustic, Sunburst
10932 - Westcoast SW201 Acoustic Redburst
12437 - Yairi FY84 OM Folk Acoustic Guitar
14248 - Yairi Ray 65 Small Parlor Guitar
13691 - Yamaha FG411C, Vintage Sunburst, Used
13387 - Yamaha FG720S Yamaha FG720S
13308 - Yamaha FG720S Dreadnought Sunburst
8019 - YAMAHA FG730S Electro Acoustic Guitar

6 String Electro Acoustics



14199 - Breedlove Discovery Concert CE, Natural
10978 - Breedlove Passport C250CME Electro, Nat
10294 - Breedlove Retro DiEpe with LR Baggs
10918 - Breedlove USA Gold DSRE
10068 - Brian May Phapsody Electro, Cherry
13959 - Chord Salamander Electro Acoustic Guitar
13912 - Cort L450C Concert Electro Acoustic
13908 - Cort MRE NS Electro Acoustic, Natural Satin
13920 - Cort SFX FM TBK, Trans Black
14222 - Crafter GA6S Electro Acoustic, Natural
4769 - EKO Ranger EQ Vintage Series, Black
13852 - Eko TRI 018 CW EQ Honey Burst
12358 - Faith FKV Venus Concert Cutaway/Electro
12360 - Fender Avril Lavigne Newporter Electro
6943 - Fender CD60CE, Electro, Black
7024 - Fender CD60CE, Dreadnought, Electro, Nat
4335 - Fender CD60CE Dreadnought Elec, Sunburst
10320 - Fender CD60CE Mahogany Electro Acoustic
12671 - Fender Tony Aka Sonoran SCE
10150 - Gibson J35 Electro Acoustic Guitar, Nat
13169 - Gibson LC1 Cascade, V. Sunburst, Used
14336 - Ibanez SG130 Jumbo Electro, Used

6 String Electro Acoustics



14205 - Ibanez Talman TCY20E VV, Secondhand
4555 - Jimmy Moon Bryan Adams Signature
4554 - Jimmy Moon PF0003 Electro, Pau Ferro B&S
6948 - Jimmy Moon RD3, Electro, Natural
9552 - LAG T300AE Electro Acoustic Guitar
9186 - Lakewood D14CP Electro Acoustic, Natural
12674 - Lakewood J14 Baritone Jumbo Electro
12672 - Lakewood J14CP Jumbo Electro
12658 - Lakewood M14 CP
12678 - Lakewood M18CP Grand Concert Electro
12679 - Lakewood Sungha Jung Signature Electro
5407 - Levin LS500CE, Small Electro, Blue
9243 - Levin Nalgan Electro Acoustic, Used
14129 - Luna HeartSong Series Parlor Electro
14130 - Luna Henna Oasis Steel String Electro
14128 - Luna Vista Wolf Electro Acoustic Guitar
13717 - Maestro Raffles AB-CSB A Guitar
13714 - Maestro Raffles FM-CSB A Custom Jumbo
12696 - Maestro Raffles Flame Maple Custom Electro
12702 - Maestro Raffles IR-CSB R Small Jumbo Electro
12790 - Maestro Raffles MDT Small Jumbo Electro
12789 - Maestro Raffles Monkey Pod Electro
13713 - Maestro Raffles MR-CSB A Custom Jumbo
12701 - Maestro Rosetta IR Dreadnought Electro
12792 - Maestro Rosetta MDT Dreadnought Electro
12596 - Maestro Rosetta with fitted LR Baggs
12793 - Maestro Rosetta MRDT Dreadnought Electro
12791 - Maestro Rosetta SR Dreadnought Electro
13212 - Maestro Singa Flame Maple Custom Electro
12594 - Maestro Singa Handmade Electro Acoustic
12699 - Maestro Singa K-CSB-K Koa Jumbo Electro
13712 - Maestro Singa MR-CSB A Custom Jumbo
13209 - Maestro Singa MRDT Medium Jumbo Electro
13711 - Maestro Singa O-CSB Custom Medium Jumbo
13718 - Maestro Victoria with fitted LR Baggs
13715 - Maestro Victoria IR OOO with LR Baggs
13207 - Maestro Victoria with fitted LR Baggs
13208 - Maestro Victoria with fitted LR Baggs
13055 - Maestro Victoria with fitted LR Baggs
12783 - Maestro Victoria MR OOO with LR Baggs
13856 - Martin Ed Sheeran X Signature Ed Electro
14214 - Martin OMCE1E Electro Acoustic Guitar
13674 - Martin OMXAE Electro Acoustic, Black
12439 - Northwood Custom Koa 80D Electro
12438 - Northwood Custom Myrtle 80 Series D'ought
4400 - Northwood P80, OOOV Electro, Natural
6403 - Northwood R80, OM Electro, Natural
12472 - Ovalon 6868 Elite Standard Secondhand
14247 - Ovalon CC267 Electro Acoustic, Used
14169 - PRS SE Alex Lifeson Signature
10095 - RainSong BJM1000N2 Graphite Guitar
10094 - RainSong S-DR1000N2 Graphite Guitar
10038 - RainSong S-DR1000N2 Graphite Guitar
9820 - RainSong CO-DR1000N2
9821 - RainSong CO-JM1000N2
9819 - RainSong CO-OM1000N2
9818 - RainSong CO-WS1000N2
9814 - RainSong DR1000 Graphite Guitar
10097 - RainSong H-DR1100N2
10100 - RainSong H-OM1000N2
10098 - RainSong H-WS1000N2
9815 - RainSong JM1000 Graphite Guitar
4812 - RainSong OM1000
10082 - RainSong P12 Parlor
10088 - RainSong P14 Parlor
10091 - RainSong P14 Parlor in Blue
10092 - RainSong P14 Parlor in Green
10093 - RainSong P14 Parlor in Pewter
10089 - RainSong P14 Parlor in Red
9824 - RainSong S-DR1000N2 Dreadnought Studio
9823 - RainSong S-OM1000N2 OM Studio Electro
9822 - RainSong S-WS1000N2 WS Studio Electro
9827 - RainSong SG Shorty Gloss Shorty Series
7974 - RainSong WS1000 Graphite Guitar
5257 - Satori YD18EQ, Dreadnought Electro, Nat
8234 - Satori YD42EQ Electro Acoustic, Vint Nat
5255 - Satori YD28HEQ, OM Electro, Natural
14251 - Takamine EF508KC NEX Cutaway Electro
14262 - Takamine GD11MCE NS
14253 - Takamine GD30CE Electro Acoustic, Nat
14257 - Takamine GF30CE Brown Sunburst
14252 - Takamine GN15CE Electro Acoustic, Nat
14258 - Takamine GN51CE Electro Acoustic, Nat
14264 - Takamine GX11ME NS
14261 - Takamine GY35E New Yorker Electro
14249 - Takamine P1DC Electro Acoustic Guitar
14250 - Takamine P3DC Electro Acoustic Guitar
14060 - Tanglewood TPE SF DLX
13295 - Tanglewood TPESFCEZS Electro Acoustic
14063 - Tanglewood TSF CE N SS
13462 - Tanglewood TWC XB
13459 - Tanglewood TW115 SSCE
13458 - Tanglewood TW130 SMCE Electro Acoustic
14070 - Tanglewood TW145 SS CE
4188 - Tanglewood TW40 DANE Dreadnought Electro
4187 - Tanglewood TW40 QANE Orchestra
8330 - Tanglewood TW40SD VSE in Vintage Sunburst
9202 - Tanglewood TW45 W OPE Acoustic Guitar
12304 - Tanglewood TW73 VSE
13288 - Tanglewood TWJPE Parlor Electro
13485 - Taylor 515E Electro Acoustic, Used
14078 - Taylor 912C Acoustic Guitar Used
8007 - Vintage Gordon Giltrap Signature
14108 - Washburn D28 SN Acoustic Guitar c.1989
10931 - Westcoast SW201 VT Electro, Sunburst
8307 - Westcoast SW201 VT Electro Acoustic Black
8306 - Westcoast SW201-VT Electro Acoustic, Nat
0000 - Yamaha - 5 Models in Stock Now

Classical Guitars



13835 - Admira 1000 Classical, No EQ Used
13026 - Admira Concerto Classical Guitar
8590 - Azahar Model 31A Classical Guitar
6031 - Azahar Model 40B Classical Guitar
13857 - Joan Cashimira 3A Concert, Used
8584 - Mendieta Conservatoire A Classical
8507 - Mendieta Conservatoire C Classical
6777 - Mendieta Estudio S Classical
8240 - Mendieta Estudio T Classical Guitar
12238 - Mendieta Estudio VCE Electro
6029 - Ramirez 1NE Classical Guitar
6335 - Ramirez 2E Classical Guitar
6028 - Ramirez 4E Classical Guitar
5251 - Ramirez AE Classical Guitar
5644 - Ramirez George Harrison Model
6337 - Ramirez R1 Classical Guitar
6336 - Ramirez R2 Classical Guitar
8357 - Ramirez R4 Classical Guitar
6027 - Ramirez S1 Classical Guitar
12761 - Ramirez SP Classical Guitar
6442 - Roberto C1 Classical Guitar With Bag
6441 - Roberto C2 Classical Guitar
12302 - Tanglewood TCMR1 Classical Guitar
10999 - Westcoast Student 4/4 Classical, Red

12 Strings



13865 - Breedlove Pursuit 12 String Acoustic
13907 - Cort Earth 7012ENS Electro 12-String
12227 - Eko 12 String Guitar, Secondhand
13553 - Eko Vintage Ranger 12 in Black, Reissue
9553 - Lag T200D12 12 String Acoustic Guitar
9816 - Rainsong JM3000 Classic Series Electro
9817 - Rainsong WS3000 Classic Series Electro
14256 - Takamine GD30CE 12 String, Black
13988 - Tanglewood TW1200 12-String Acoustic
13475 - Tanglewood TW145 12 SS CE
12706 - Washburn D42S 12 12 String Guitar

Mandolin Family



8826 - Ashbury AM-325 Octave Mandola
8824 - Ashbury AM-370 Mandolin
13527 - Blue Moon BB15 Bouzouki GR3001
14198 - Breedlove Crossover Mandolin OO VS, Bk
14028 - Breedlove Crossover OO O Hole Mandolin,
12568 - Fender FM635S Acoustic Mandolin, Sunburst
12540 - Fender FM635E Electro Acoustic Mandolin
4551 - Jimmy Moon A Plus E Electro, Natural
9240 - Jimmy Moon A2 Acoustic Mandolin, Natural
4564 - Jimmy Moon A Plus Electro Bouzouki, Nat
4563 - Jimmy Moon Octave Mandolin (Mandola) Nat
4553 - Jimmy Moon Standard Mandolin
9430 - Ozark Flat Back Bouzouki
8315 - Westcoast M20 Mandolin Sunburst
12347 - Westcoast M20S Mandolin Sunburst
8316 - Westcoast M50E Electro Mandolin

Travel Guitars



13550 - Eko Evo Mini EQ Travel Guitar
13848 - Eko Tri Mini Honey Burst 3/4 Acoustic
13849 - Eko Tri Mini Natural 3/4 Acoustic
5214 - Martin & Co LXM Little Martin, Natural
5835 - Martin Backpacker Acoustic Travel Guitar
13856 - Martin Ed Sheeran X Signature Ed Electro
13324 - Martin LX Red Little Martin
7115 - Martin LX1 Little Martin
7320 - Martin LX1E, Electro Travel Guitar
14264 - Takamine GX11ME NS
9588 - Tanglewood TW15 Baby All Solid Travel
13271 - Vintage VTG100 Travel Guitar in Natural

Ukuleles



12564 - Barnes & Mullins BJ306 6-String Banjo
4371 - Barnes & Mullins UB1 Banjo Ukulele
8209 - Delta Blue DUB2F Banjo Ukulele
8208 - Delta Blue DUB2F Banjo Ukulele
0000 - Fender - 2 Models in Stock Now
13066 - Iberica Soprano Special Ukulele, Acacia
13067 - Iberica Soprano Special Ukulele, Walnut
12338 - Luke Piccolo Standard Ukulele Inc Gigbag
0000 - Kala - 6 Models in Stock Now
12285 - Lag U100C Concert Ukulele
13978 - Laka - 2 Models in Stock Now
0000 - Magic Fluke - 7 Models in Stock Now
5010 - Mahalo UTL1 Soprano Ukulele
0000 - Nukulele - 6 Models in Stock Now
8514 - Ohana BK10 Baritone Ukulele
8515 - Ohana BK20 Baritone Ukulele
12610 - Ohana BK22 Baritone Ukulele
12609 - Ohana BKB35E Bass Ukulele
7102 - Ohana CK10S Concert Ukulele in Mahogany
13633 - Ohana CK15BK Concert Ukulele, Black
13634 - Ohana CK15BL Concert Ukulele, Blue
13635 - Ohana CK15GN Concert Ukulele, Green
13632 - Ohana CK15MR Concert Ukulele, Garnet Red
12607 - Ohana CK15W Concert Ukulele
12605 - Ohana CK15Z Concert Ukulele
9050 - Ohana CK20CE Concert Uke
4466 - Ohana CK20S Concert Ukulele
13639 - Ohana CK22Z Concert Ukulele, Zebrawood
13643 - Ohana CK23 Concert Ukulele
8520 - Ohana CK35CE Electro Concert Ukulele
8519 - Ohana CK35GS Concert Ukulele in Mahogany
13622 - Ohana CK35L Concert Uke, Tenor Neck
12603 - Ohana CK38 Concert Ukulele
8513 - Ohana CK50MG Concert Ukulele
8512 - Ohana CK50WG Concert Ukulele
13627 - Ohana CKS15E Slimline Concert Ukulele
8508 - Ohana PK10S Soprano Ukulele Pineapple
8516 - Ohana PK25G Soprano Ukulele Pineapple
13637 - Ohana SK10GN Soprano Uke, Matte Green
4712 - Ohana SK10S Soprano Ukulele
13636 - Ohana SK10YW Soprano Uke, Matte Yellow
13644 - Ohana SK12 Soprano Ukulele
7099 - Ohana SK15BLK Soprano Ukulele in Black
4711 - Ohana SK20S Soprano Ukulele Uke
14210 - Ohana SK21M Premium Mahogany Sop
13626 - Ohana SK22 Soprano Ukulele
8517 - Ohana SK22Z Sop Ukulele Zebrawood B&S
13642 - Ohana SK23 Soprano Ukulele
4710 - Ohana SK25 Soprano Ukulele
4715 - Ohana SK35G Solid Mahogany Gloss
9052 - Ohana SK38 Soprano Uke, Mahogany
14211 - Ohana SK70BA Spruce & Morinda Sop Uke
7108 - Ohana SK70MG Soprano Ukulele
14212 - Ohana SK70WG Soprano Uke, Willow B & S
7106 - Ohana SK75 Soprano Ukulele
7107 - Ohana SK75R Soprano Ukulele
12608 - Ohana SKS15E Slim Electro Soprano Uke
9528 - Ohana TK20CE Electro Acoustic Tenor Uke
14209 - Ohana TK22Z Spruce & Zebrawood Tenor
14208 - Ohana TK35-10 Tiple 10 String Tenor
12611 - Ohana TK38 Tenor Ukulele
12612 - Ohana TKS15E Tenor Ukulele
12390 - Ohana Soprano Uke Gig Bag
13311 - Ohana Concert Uke Gig Bag
13312 - Ohana Tenor Uke Gig Bag
13310 - Ohana Baritone Uke Gig Bag
5009 - Ozark Ukulele Bag
12522 - Recording King RL998 Resonator Ukulele
12740 - ResoVibe Weekly Wachee Resonator Ukulele
0000 - Risa - 2 Models in Stock Now
9639 - Stage USX SPA Soprano Uke Spalted Maple
0000 - Ukuri - 4 Models in Stock Now
13033 - Vox Ukelectric 33 Ukulele, Blackburst

Acoustic Amplification



0000 - AER - 12 Models in Stock Now
0000 - Acus One - 9 Models in Stock Now
13830 - Acus One Ten, Black
13831 - Acus One Ten, Wood Finish
13905 - Blackstar ID Core BEAM Bluetooth Amp
10496 - Fender Acoustasonic 15 Acoustic Amp
8166 - Fender Acoustasonic 150 Acoustic Combo
9166 - Loudbox Artist
4548 - Fishman Loudbox Mini - 60W, 1x6.5"
5286 - Fishman A220 - 220W, 6x4"
9711 - Laney LA12C Acoustic Amp Combo
13282 - Markbass AC1001 Acoustic Combo
6770 - Marshall AS100D - 50W+50W, 2x8"
13956 - Marshall AS500 - 50W, 2x8"
6771 - Marshall AS500 - 50W, 2x8"
4573 - Peavey Ecosonic E20 - 20W, 1x8"
4572 - Peavey Ecosonic E208 - 20W, 2x8"
4976 - Roland AC33 30W - 1x5"
9358 - Roland AC33, Rosewood
11129 - Roland AC40 Acoustic Chorus Guitar Amplifier
6505 - Roland AC60 Acoustic Amp - 30w, 2x6.5"
9383 - Roland AC60 Acoustic Guitar Combo, RW
5597 - Roland AC90 - 90W, 2x8"
5574 - Roland Cube Street 25+2.5W, 6.5"
13018 - Tanglewood T3 30W Acoustic Amplifier
8108 - Tanglewood T6, 60W
13471 - Tanglewood TXS Bass Sub
10937 - Yamaha THR5A Acoustic Amp

ASK THE EXPERTS

Musicians'
Union
mu

RELEASING YOUR MUSIC ON VINYL

Who said vinyl was just a fad? Early this year it was revealed that sales had reached over one million in 2014 – the highest since 1995. It is predicted this will reach two million by the end of 2015. All the signs are that the vinyl market is set to go from strength to strength. So how can you be part of this resurgent movement?

Releasing your music on vinyl may not be as straightforward as doing so digitally, but it can work for artists, building fan engagement and loyalty. Unlike downloads, vinyl is tactile and gives you the opportunity to express yourself creatively through artwork and sleeve notes – and it sounds better too, right?

'While it may not seem like a huge money-spinner, vinyl sales hit an 18-year high last year,' says Maddie Hennessy, MU licensing officer. HMV reported a 170% increase in 2014, with the UK overall seeing a 60% increase putting us third globally in terms of vinyl sales. 'Even indie retailers such as Rough Trade that traditionally attract a steady consumer base for vinyl have seen sales rise over the past couple of years,' she adds.

This resurgence in vinyl's popularity was recognised by the launch of the first Official Vinyl Albums Chart Top 40 and Official Vinyl Singles Chart Top 40 in April 2015, and earlier this year HMV launched its "HMV Loves Vinyl" campaign to raise awareness of their commitment to vinyl in every store.

In terms of releasing your own vinyl, there are some key factors to consider.

Firstly, cost. The high price of the oil used in the manufacturing process means that the price per unit, compared to CD, is high. It can be as much as £8 or £9 per album – and it will cut into your profit margin, so it's advisable to only press units you can sell.

One way to avoid overstocking is to

encourage your fanbase to pre-order – buying, or pledging to buy, the album before even a note has been recorded. Veteran prog rockers Marillion did it a decade ago, and sell direct to their fans via their website so they can keep more of the profit.

Using a similar crowd-funding model, companies such as Qrates (qrates.com) are easing the burden of costs for artists and small labels by pressing and selling the product, only pressing a batch once a certain number of orders have been confirmed.

You may prefer to go down the more traditional route of using a pressing plant; another challenge when planning a vinyl release is working out where to get the release pressed. There are few pressing plants, and long lead times. Many artists source overseas, particularly Germany. When it comes to sourcing a good pressing plant, it is worth asking around. Quality, reliability and competitive pricing are key.

Remastering is often advisable when releasing a vinyl version of a release. A well-mastered CD can translate to vinyl, but a sub-standard CD master can impair the sound.

'It's also important to register your works with the relevant collection societies if you want to receive full royalties on sales and airplay,' highlights Maddie. Register with PRS For Music (prsformusic.com) if you own the copyright in the underlying music contained within the recording, and PPL (ppl.com) if you own the copyright in the recording itself.

It's advisable to invest in a unique identifier number for each release. This could be a catalogue number, barcode or International Standard Recording Code (ISRC) and should be considered for any vinyl, CD or download you wish to sell. If you need on advice on releasing your own product or any of the issues mentioned here, get in touch via theMU.org.

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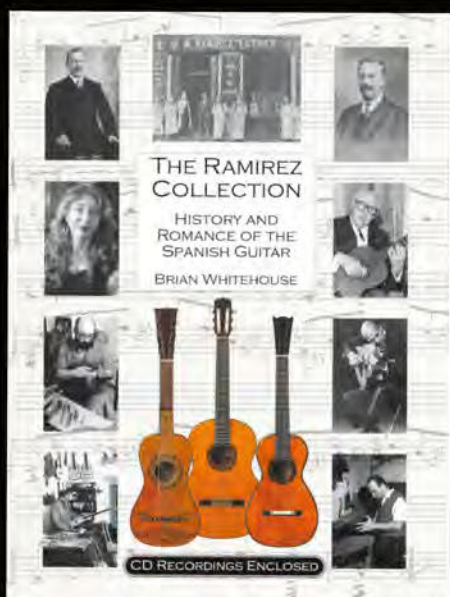
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www.acousticcentre.co.uk

THE RAMIREZ COLLECTION

History and Romance of the Spanish Guitar



The House of José Ramírez, Spain's longest established guitar maker, was founded in Madrid in 1882. Over many years it has built and conserved a Museum Collection of instruments constructed by members of the family and other great Spanish luthiers, many of whom were trained in their workshops.

For the first time in this long and distinguished history, new and unique recordings of these highly important guitars, including those that belonged to the legendary Andrés Segovia, are presented here played by Brian Whitehouse, concert guitarist, composer and aficionado.

All these wonderful instruments, displaying over two centuries of the luthiers' art, are beautifully illustrated together with detailed descriptions. Photographs and notes relate their place in the history of music and biographical details are given of the luthiers, players and composers contemporary to their construction. Many interesting anecdotes are told and the project captures, in a highly illuminating way, the spirit of these wonderful artistic creations.

If you're interested in the history of the guitar, then "The Ramirez Collection" will reward you ... the recordings are very good ... Brian's performance sounds wonderful ... great pictures and archive shots too, make this an enjoyable book and CD.

Steve Howe

Researched and written with a passion ... a quite unique journey through this remarkable collection. MiPro Magazine

An enlightening book for lovers of the guitar and a privilege to be able to share the author's experience with such an interesting array of instruments.

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JOHN & JACOB

John and Jacob are an enigma. Firstly, there are five of them, most of whom are not called John or Jacob; secondly, though they are from Nashville, and have often been seen in what we might consider country musician's attire, their style is eclectic, drawing more on pop and late 50s / early 60s music than on country in many songs. **Acoustic** spent some time chatting to John Davidson.

WORDS: SAM WISE IMAGES: BOB DOYLE & ASSOCIATES

Your music contains a lot of 50s and early 60s references; I heard Everly Brothers in 'Be My Girl' and Little Richard in 'Give It Away'. Were you surrounded by that music growing up?

Yeah, you know, when we were growing up we were just exposed to good music by our parents, and people around us. I mean, we were listening to current music too, and getting into that at the same time, but riding in the car with our parents we heard a lot of good music through them. I mean, we didn't know that we liked it so much, we just grew up on it, and when we got older, we just realised that was the stuff that we kept going back to listen to again, and it was always good. So we were always into that kind

of music, and it just bled naturally over into what we do, just because we love it.

If the band were superheroes, what would be your origin story?

Well, really, Jacob and I grew up together when we were kids, even before we knew each other we lived a block apart because our families are from the same area. We had a class together, and we ended up skipping that class, and playing music together. And you know, we weren't any good; we thought we were rock stars, but actually we were terrible, but we kept on playing because people said that we could play music – and we believed that.

We kept on writing songs, and you know, if you do something long enough, you eventually start to learn your craft, and become skilful.

And then we found the rest of the band; Jake Thrasher, the bass player, was a friend of mine; Trevor Davis, the drummer, lived just across the lake. Then we ran into Austin Smith, our keyboard guy, by the pool at a building we lived in in LA, and everything just fell in place so naturally that it was actually kind of weird that it came so easily. Here in Nashville, bands are put together with hired guns, you know all these ace players, and that's who makes up the band, and we are honestly a group of best friends who all live together, play together and



travel together, who all just happened to love the same type of music, and formed a band. It's like being in a band with your best friends, and I think we all consider ourselves pretty lucky to be doing it.

Most of you are from Alabama; what do you want to represent about the South?

That's right, all of us but Austin, who's from Abilene, Texas. I think no matter where you go in the world, where you come from is part of you. Unless you can disconnect from it, which we can't do, nor do we really want to. We're proud of where we're from, and so I think, naturally, you're just who you are. I think a lot of people like where we're at. Some don't, but we're Southern boys, you can't take that away from us, 'cos we can't help it!

You're based in Nashville, but you're not that country (apart from the hats). How is that working out for you?

Well, you know, I think that goes back to the music we grew up on. We listened to a lot of rock and roll, Beatles, Beach Boys, and also a lot of indie material, but the thing that really brings

us together is rock and roll music. I don't mean rock and roll as it's used now, I mean, like pop songs in the 60s that now are called classic rock and oldies. It's fun and it's energetic, and you know, if we're going to have to live with these songs for years, we might as well write some songs that we like to play. And I think that there's a lot of great country music out there, and we have some songs that kind of touch on country music, but when it comes to the full band, we have a sort of energy, you know? It's just what we want to hear on stage, and Nashville has become such a broad city in terms of the music coming out of here. You have major bands coming out of Nashville that aren't country. So a lot of people feel like country music is the only thing that lives here, and the thing is, we have a foot in the country world, but it's a very diverse place.

How does Europe respond to what is very American sounding music?

Europe loves it, and we love Europe. I think it's the coolest thing to come to Europe. The first time we came over was 2012 with The Band Perry [they also penned The Band Perry's



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hit 'Done'], and we really had no idea what to expect. We had two days to prepare and come over, and we didn't even have a band name, which is how we came to be called John & Jacob, because we had to get a product together in a short time. But John & Jacob is five people, and though it sounds like two, it's very much a band. We came over to Europe again last summer with Kacey Musgraves, and you know, I just found the audiences in the UK to be very receptive. I feel like they're there to really listen and enjoy the whole experience, and it's a lot of fun because you don't get that everywhere you go. In Nashville, there's music every night of the week by this person or that person, so you really don't think about it, but when it only comes through every now and then, maybe it makes it something special. It takes a lot of effort to come over; it's not easy to do, and it's nice when people appreciate it. In the States, country music is almost like top 40 radio; you

have really pop sounding songs with electronic drums on country radio – that stuff would not have been called country 10 years ago. I think country music at its root is more traditional, and about melody, and there are a few people still doing that. You know, at one point people were appalled by the Beatles and Elvis; they were too dangerous to listen to, and it's hard to see what's going to come through now that's going to be dangerous, so who knows!

What have been your most memorable touring experiences?

I might have to give you the edited version! I mean, we've been out with Kacey a lot the last year, and we've become friends, but... oh there's one I would just love to tell you, but I'd better be safe than sorry. I'll tell you another one – we went up to South Dakota, near Mount Rushmore, which is the craziest thing to ever see in person, because it's big faces in a big

mountain, which is already a difficult thing to wrap your head around... I mean, there are more variables to this story that make it more interesting, but I don't know if I can, really....

I can see that we're on dangerous ground; can you tell us about what's currently happening for John & Jacob?

We have some festivals that we're playing here in the States, but it's kind of sporadic, and we have some Canadian shows, but we haven't booked up that much of the summer, because we want to dedicate time to writing, so we're writing and recording a whole lot, but then in October, we're coming back over to the UK.

John and Jacob have energy and excitement in spades, and we encourage you to catch them here while you can. Their eponymous debut album is out now and you can get it via iTunes. For more information, visit: www.johnandjacob.com



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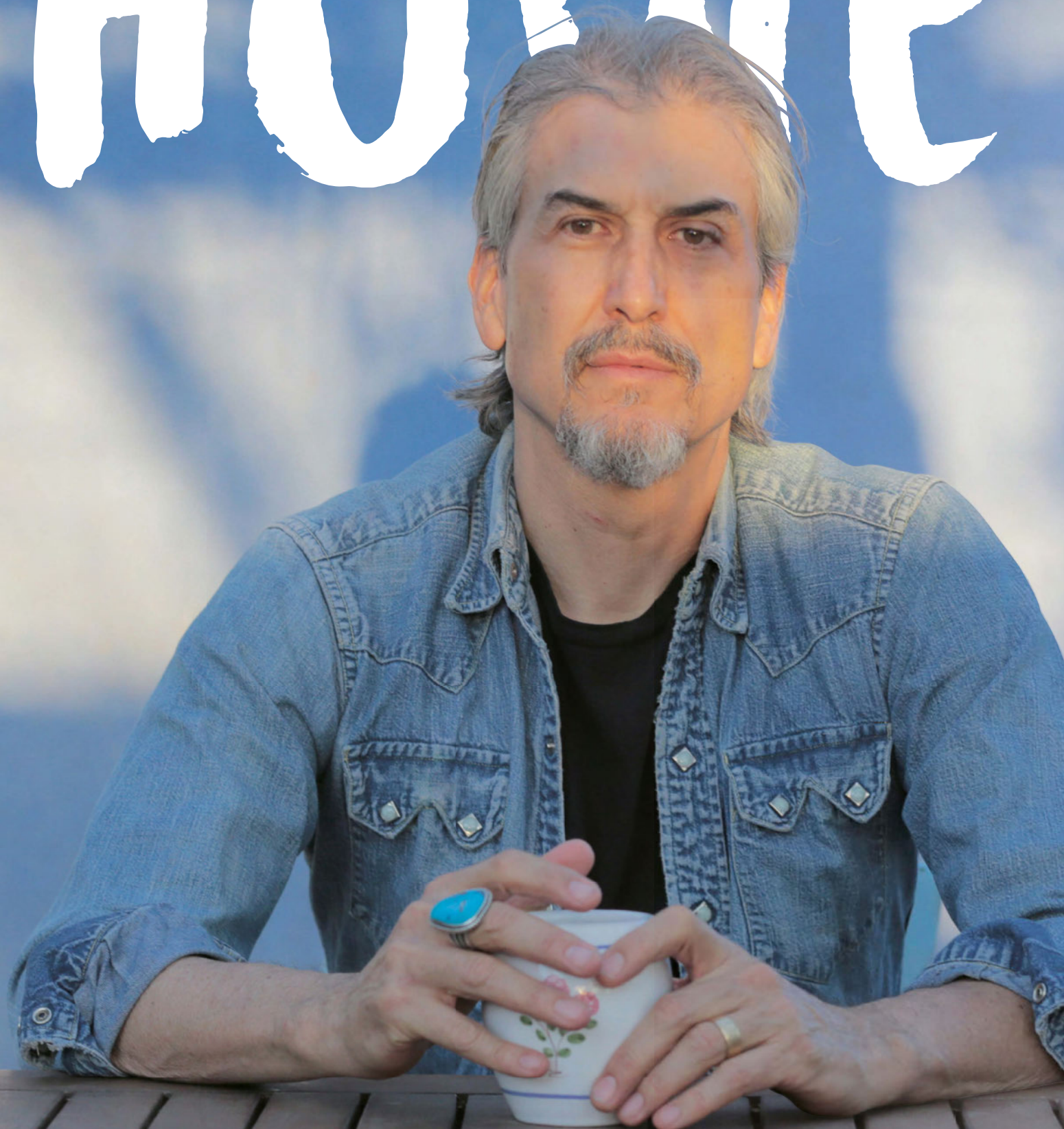
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HOWE



GELB

*Giant Sand, the iconic band fronted by luminary Howe Gelb, celebrates 30 years of freewheeling and ever-evolving music making on new album **Heartbreak Pass**.*

WORDS: JULIAN PIPER IMAGES: OMER KRESO

I find music a celebration of existence and whatever I am now – this is where it ends up. For anybody who wants to follow along, I'm assuming they have the same mindset; but I'm nothing special and maybe this is what they would be doing if they made time to do it.

Well I guess you can't blame Tucson for making the most of it. Not every American city can boast a Cold War era titan missile silo turned museum. And in a way the lurking menace is appropriate. Perched on the edge of the 60-mile stretch of the Sonora desert that separates it from the Mexican frontier, Tucson started life as a wild west town and as first stop for the "illegals" who tried to cross the border 24 hours a day – and it is now right back in the action.

It's an edgy kind of place, and when you think of it, an ideal hang out for Howe Gelb. If you haven't come across Gelb and his amorphous band Giant Sand, then let's begin by saying Howe is not your average musician.

Categories? Forget them. Like the shifting Sonora sand, and with more than 50 albums, Gelb's music has meandered through just about every form imaginable; punk, rootsy rock, jazz, gospel, and Spanish guitar music have all surrendered to his creative lust. Along the way, he's worked with a dazzling array of guests including

Lucinda Williams, PJ Harvey, Victoria Williams and Vic Chesnutt, all seduced by his aptitude for coming up with the unexpected and occasionally weird.

His new album *Heartbreak Pass* finds the master on fine form, 15 tracks that begin with Gelb solo on acoustic guitar, before taking the listener on an aural trip involving a Cretan string section, a Canadian choir, "a wall of sound in Berlin, a little noodling in Italy, a dash of Nashville, the rest slowly simmered in Tucson." Amazingly, it all hangs together, and undoubtedly long time devotees are in for a treat. To like Giant Sand and its main man, is like being part of some giant musical freemasonry.

The cultural shift from a lonely gothic mansion in Devon, to Gelb's adobe house in Tucson is something of a quantum leap, but I began our talk by mentioning to the quietly spoken Howe that it was in that particular creaky old venue I once caught his friend Rainer Ptacek in action. A mesmerising slide guitarist who came up with beautiful soundscapes unlike anyone else on the block, but in the iniquitous way that the music industry functions never received the acclaim that was his due, Rainer formed a band with Gelb in 1980 that they dubbed the Giant Sandworms. Rainer died long before his time in 1997, but can be seen as the sonic architect for much of what has followed in Gelb's career.

'Yeah, I remember, I played there too, full of crop circle chicks. But let's use Rainer as our base. I met Rainer back in 1976, I was 19 at the time and Rainer was five years older; it was the 1970s and there was plenty of room for psychedelics,' Gelb laughs. 'Somebody insisted that I meet this guy in town, and it turned out he was playing at this little joint down the street. I got there and he invited me – as a way of shaking hands – to play

piano with him on stage. We immediately started jamming, and that's how we bonded, that was our dialogue. I couldn't play that well, could only really play in G, but apparently his guitar was tuned to G, so that was perfect. We began to play, but because I was still tripping, I had a real problem facing the audience, and just kept playing until I could figure out what to do, playing for about 45 minutes without stopping. This was okay with Rainer – it made sense to him – and our blues pattern kept morphing and changing, turning into something else, going back around. Eventually the place closed and everybody had to leave – and then it felt ok to stop. That was our sonic blood brotherhood, and from that point on because my dad wasn't around, he became the older brother I desperately needed in my life. We had a way of subtly informing each other about information we each had, and Rainer would teach without really teaching by pointing the way and underlining a few things. He became the most important male figure in my life.'

Longevity – in career terms – seems to have always been part of your mindset. 'When we began to actually make recordings, Rainer turned to me and he said, "Let's not make an album that's going to embarrass us 20 years from now" – and that's been my template ever since. To the best of my ability, I try not to adhere to any current trend, because trends come and go and then they sound embarrassing later. So I'm going to hand the responsibility over to Rainer for all of that.'

You've been quoted as saying Giant Sand is a "large town where everyone is welcome to come in and play". How has that worked in practice? Do



you find it easy to find other musicians that share your kind of vision? 'Basically, what I set up was a publicist's nightmare – a free artists colony from the get-go, a place where the door was wide open. If you could come in and play, then the important thing was finding out how comfortable we were with each other. If we could hang out with each other, then in doing so the music could click.'

'When I look back on it and wonder about all the people I have played with, my theory is that there's possibly a kind of rhythm in everybody's heartbeat that more seamlessly hangs with certain people. The people you can't play with so well are the people whose heartbeats are slightly out of sync, they make too much of a polyrhythm. If you can hang out with someone, play, and jam, then the music follows. I've never looked for people who might happen to be technically advanced in their instruments.'

As any listener to his albums will quickly realise, Gelb is the antithesis of a Pro Tools worshipper. Spontaneity rules. 'I started out being an artist, and what I noticed in my drawing was that I'd like it more when there were fewer lines; sometimes I thought I'd ruined drawings by drawing too much. So when I started making music in the mid-1970s, the same rules applied. Often, there was just too much stuff. I found that when I was settled with restrictions like having to record on a four-track, the results were far better. I was coming up with stuff I could listen to over and over again. Finally, I realised that this minimalism was more conducive to my comfort zone.'

For some years, Gelb has divided his time between his home in a Tucson barrio, and his wife's home in Denmark where he has a band of Danish musicians who regularly back him up on the road. It's an arrangement that seems to work well, particularly as he eschews any notion that his surroundings influence his music.

'People always try to blame the desert on my sound, and I always try to shrug that off. They thought I was milking the desert idea, and I was dangerously close to calling these people liars. Sure, where I live adds a kind of symbiotic nature to my sound – a kind of wide open, vast emptiness. But, if anything, it also has a high erosion content. Things change here everyday according to extreme conditions. I like to keep sounds wide open, which is about the only correlation I can come up with.'

Quite apart from his Danish wife Sofie, Gelb's love affair with Europe almost began by accident in the 1980s when his first album was released through the now defunct Demon label, a record company that thrived on the obscure and wonderful.

'I had two different bands at the time – a rock band and a country band – so I had to learn right then and there how to record fast on a four-track for free; I made those early records in a day and a half each. And when people wanted them in exotic places like England and France, that got me going over there to tour. Once I saw that on the continent there were arts councils, socialism, people employing art to be important to everybody's growth and existence – and there

were sound systems superior to the States and England – I felt free to concentrate on the music, and not the difficulties of touring so much.'

And 35 years on from when he recorded his first makeshift album, it's a tribute to Gelb's ingenuity and talent that he's still out there.

'I have a tin-ear, an incapability of covering anyone else's material, which is why I started writing my own stuff so I'd have something to play. If you take your cue from following your heart, those primal elements of existence and artistry, then you're going to be okay as long as you don't try to constrict it by demands of a plan or some intelligence getting in the way. This is all I can offer and it's allowed me longevity.'

One thing's for sure: Gelb's never been concerned about lack of mainstream success. 'No – that never really had that much appeal to me to begin with. But in the interim I've bought a couple of houses, have a couple cars that are paid off, raised three children and I'm kind of a blue-collar indie rocker. This is how I exist. I made a joke one time that planning is an insult to the future, and I believe it. When you involve yourself in some kind of artistry, it's all about sensitivity, emotions – not about strategy or intelligence. What you do with your art afterwards might benefit from those things. If you listen to your gut, your heart, and you learn from the beginning how important these things are, it's everything.'

Giant Sand's album *Heartbreak Pass* is out now on New West Records.

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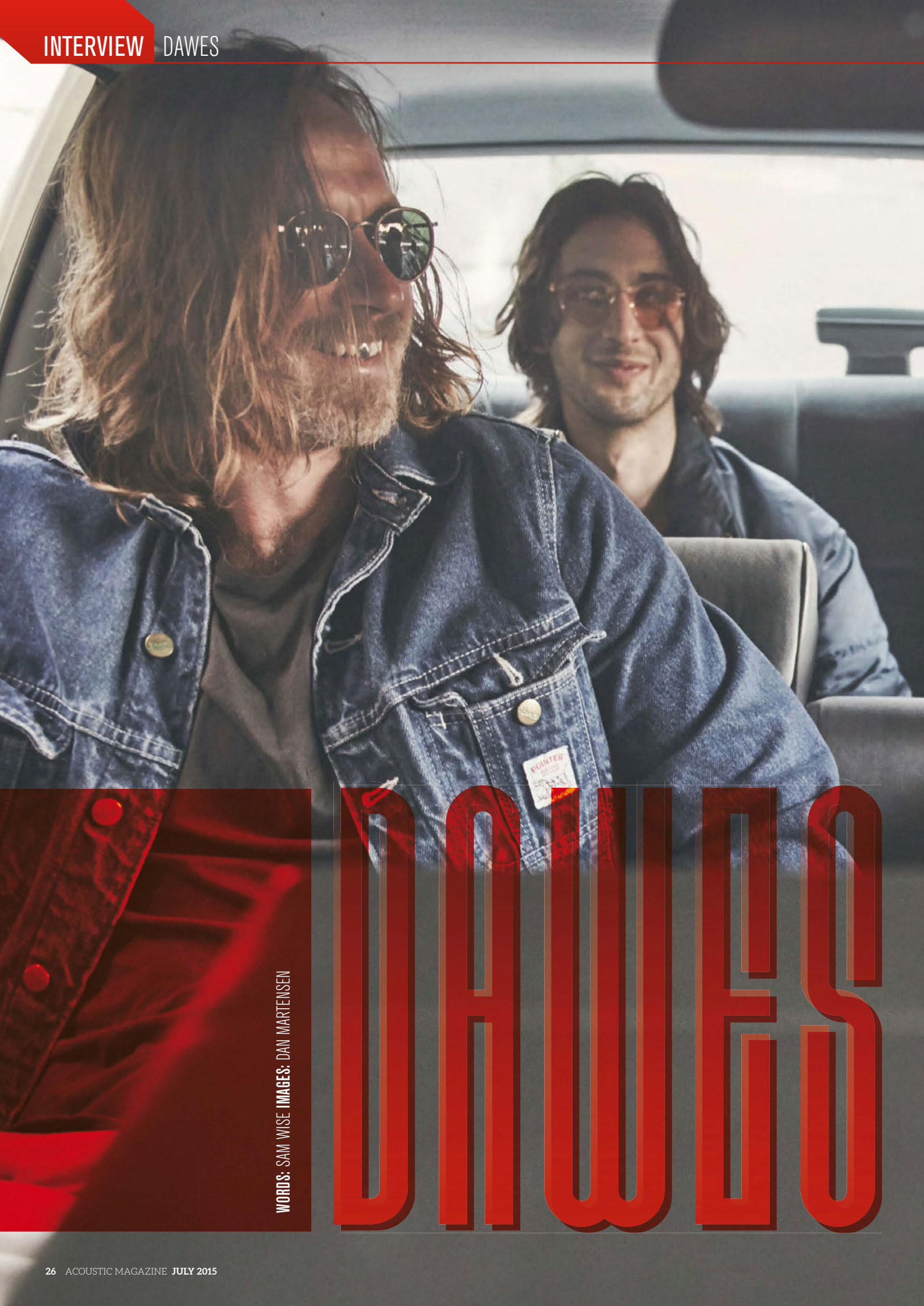
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WORDS: SAM WISE IMAGES: DAN MARTENSEN

DAWES



Taylor and Griffin Goldsmith's band, Dawes, has been compared to the great Laurel Canyon bands of the 60s and 70s until they're sick of the comparison – and it's not surprising, given the sun-drenched, harmony laden nature of their classic sound. Seven years into their career, Dawes are touring in support of their most recent album All Your Favourite Bands.

You've been compared to some of the great California bands of the 60s; was that music important to you, growing up?

It actually wasn't. I mean, I was peripherally aware of it, but not really that aware. We made our first record, and we were listening to a lot of the stuff that everybody listens to – a lot of Bob Dylan, and some other stuff that we were particularly taken with, Bonny Prince Billy for instance. After we'd made our first record, people said to us, "You've got that California sound, you know, and you should check out all that

California stuff. Do you know Warren Zevon, do you know Jackson Browne?" And some of them we knew; I knew Neil Young and Joni Mitchell's music, but we didn't know who Warren Zevon was. We knew who Jackson Browne was, but we hadn't listened to him at all. So we started getting into that, and because it's great music, it became a big part of what we loved, but it wasn't really something we grew up in. It's actually kind of fascinating – maybe there's something in the water that makes California music sound the way it does because we weren't really trying.

What was the spark that set you off as a musician early on?

A lot of it is just that stuff that every kid has early relationships with; stuff like really understanding the Beatles, and then Otis Redding, and as I got older, starting to discover Queen, and I got very into Steely Dan for a long time, and I just couldn't believe all the crazy stuff they were doing with chord progressions. And then it was David Bowie, Elvis Costello, Rolling Stones, the Kinks, stuff like that.

You've been compared to "Laurel Canyon artists" like Joni Mitchell and Crosby, Stills & Nash. What do you feel you receive from that legacy, and where do you see your own music as different?

I think that we found we really enjoy the way it sounds when we all sing, like a three-part harmony, building the chords together, and immediately that became like, "Oh, that's a California music thing to do". Well, we never saw it that way but we thought, "Ok, cool", and then things like guitar solos; I realise that's not commonplace any more, but for us, that's really fun, and it's one of the more direct ways for us to feel like we're expressing ourselves; not just me and the guitar player, but the whole band. That's kind of been a part of our band, because it's what makes us happy. In terms of getting away from it, you know, I think for any artist, whether songwriters or a band, you don't look at Tom Petty's career, and think, like, he went from this classic rock artist to shifting into this thing you've never heard before. It's a very recognisable style and genre; he's not reinventing the wheel, but from the subtleties and the nuances you recognise something that you're not going to get anywhere else. So we want to try different things, and we want to play different ways, but we also want to do what comes naturally and let it unfold, and I feel like so far, it's working pretty well. I feel like it's easy to listen to a record like *All Your Favourite Bands* and think of it as this classic sounding record, and in a way it is, because it is guitar and bass and organ and piano and vocal harmonies, and we wanted to keep it stripped back, and to do what we do on stage, but we feel like we're further and further along in terms of being our own players, playing an intro to a song where you feel like no other guitar player is going to play that way, no other drummer is going to play it that way. And I'm not saying that necessarily that's for the better or the worse, I just feel like that individuality, that personality, I think the artists that we all love the most, it's not something they chase after, but it's very transparent. You just sort of grow into yourself.

There seems to be a move back toward organic, soulful music at the moment, as there is every 10 years or so. What do you think has triggered that movement?

Actually, I don't feel that way at all; I wish I did, I mean it would make our lives way easier, but no. I mean, I'm sure it's there; it's always there, and you can always rattle off names of several artists that are in the mix that are making records along those lines, but you know, this is our fourth record, and it's been seven years or so, and we're still very much the same band. I mean, we've sung about different things, sung different ways, played different ways, with different style



instruments or whatever, but so far, it's always been the same band, a lot like Tom Petty again.

Is your band actually named after a British bicycle brand?

Oh, no! I remember that whenever you Google our name, it's either the band or a bicycle that you get. But no, the drummer is my brother, and our grandfather's name was Simon Dawes, and he would always try to show us what it meant to appreciate Hank Williams and Bob Wills, and all these old country artists that we never listened to him about and couldn't respond to. And then he passed, and all that music because very important to us, and it was like a cornerstone and

an inspiration for getting this band started, and so we wanted to include him in some way.

Your songs are quite personal and introspective – what prompts you to write?

Sometimes it's experience, just trying to bring order to the chaos, but other times it's just like musings on whatever. So, on the record, there are songs that don't necessarily reflect my actual experience even though they sound very personal and introspective. On a song like 'I Can't Think About It Now', it's a little bit of what I've dealt with and a little bit of what other people have dealt with. Whenever there's what I think of as a fascinating way to think about

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the world, I'll put it into the tune. A song like 'A Little Bit of Everything' from our second record, I mean the actual story is definitely nothing that I've experienced, and I decided to make that song by putting a few stories together and linking them to a title. I mean, if you listen to those old Bob Dylan songs, you can tell that there are a lot of tunes that aren't about anything that he's experienced, but that still link in to a worldview. A worldview might be a bit dramatic sounding, but you know, an outlook, and I feel like that's how I hope it is for me to; whether or not it's things that I've experienced, it perpetuates the way I look at the world.

I read an interview where you said another band didn't think you'd survive five months on the road. Clearly you have – what are the tricks to survival as a touring musician?

I think you've just got to shift your perspective on what home is. I mean, I'm just packing today, and I have to head off for three months, and I have to think of the road as home, and take enough stuff to feel okay, but I love touring. I think another thing that's important to do is to continue to remind yourself that when you're going on tour, you're getting to live that dream that your 15-year-old self wanted so much, and so for me to say that I'm going on tour for three months, and that it's too hard or whatever, it's like, "Well, this is exactly what I asked for" and I should be really grateful, and I am, you know?

Does being together all the time sharpen or blunt your creativity?

Well, I'm getting better at it. Before, I felt it blunted it. I was younger, and every day was a recuperating process, whereas now it's much easier to save energy for the show, play the show, and keep taking it easy. So I've actually been writing more on the road this last year, and I want to continue doing that because I would love to make a record a year. We already actually have seven songs towards the next one, and if I can just write three or four more on this next run, then we'll be in a good place to deal with recording that when this year's run is over.

Where would you like your career to be in 10 years' time?

Success to Dawes looks like a good catalogue, you know? I mean, we obviously don't want to be this band that's just sitting at home and making records, and not playing to anybody; we want to maintain a fanbase, and grow it, but the fact we have the fans we have in today's musical climate, with the things we play, is incredible. So we'd like to look back and say, "Yeah, there were 15 albums; there was this body of work."

Tell us about the guitars you play, and the gear you use...

I have a '66 Martin D-18 that's really nice, and a '64 Gibson J-45 that was given to me by my

best friend Blake Mills when we were 18; he got a bunch of our friends together to pay for it, and that's been my main guitar and always will be.

So you're a believer in the power of vintage?

Well, yeah, it's a crazy thing how it makes such a difference. I mean, I've played some new guitars that have been really incredible, but when you get your hands on one of those old Strats, or old Martins and Gibsons, you know, there's nothing like it.

Talk us through your upcoming tour plans?

Well it's kind of a mishmash, in a really exciting way. So we're doing some festivals, and then we're going right into a headline show for Dawes, and then from that to doing some support for Hozier, so I think the lengths of the sets, the sizes of the rooms, that's going to continue to shift over the course of the tour, which should just keep it interesting. From there, there will be some scattered touring through to October, but by the end of this year or the beginning of next, we can get in the studio and get something ready in time to do this all again next year, then that'd be pretty great.

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KACEY MUSGRAVES

The whip-smart Grammy winner tells Julian Piper about how writing fiercely witty songs to challenge the norm in small town USA was never the intention...

WORDS: JULIAN PIPER IMAGES: WOOTTON PUBLICITY

“M^ake lots of noise, kiss lots of boys, kiss lots of girls, if that’s something you’re into... Light up a joint – or don’t – just follow your arrow wherever it points.” Kacey Musgraves’ ‘Follow Your Arrow’ is the kind of song that would have once brought out the burning crosses and the men in white hoods. These days, Nashville’s a lot different from when Waylon Jennings kicked the town screaming and cussing into the mainstream with his 1976 album *Wanted, The Outlaws*. A grizzled veteran, one heck of a guitar player, and a man who famously said he “couldn’t go pop with a mouthful of firecrackers,” Waylon grew his hair, and casually racked up country music’s first platinum certified album, with a clutch of songs that firmly pointed the finger at the established musical junta.

From then on in, Nashville, and what passed for “country” music became an open church. Jack White hangs out there and has a recording studio, and the shotgun shacks of East Nashville, once a run down part of town where Steve Earle scored his dope, has become a respectable neighbourhood and home to the likes of Gillian Welch and David Rawlings.

Fast forward several decades, and Waylon’s spiritual heiress apparent, the winsome Kacey Musgraves out of Golden, Texas – “Just a church, a little market, a bunch of stray dogs, and some sweet potatoes” – a town best known for having its sweet potato festival featured by Oprah Winfrey, opens our conversation by telling me that she’s painting her toenails. No holds barred here either. ‘Yeah, I flew in last night and got an early night, great to have some down time and I feel pretty good,’ she says.

No drinking on the plane then I venture... She laughs in a way that suggests I’m dumb for even

coming up with the idea that she wouldn’t have a nip of bourbon. So, if you haven’t yet come across Kacey Musgraves, then it’s a sure bet you will soon. Her last album *Same Trailer Different Park* (2013), a less than gentle look at small town life south of the Mason-Dixon line, won best country song and best country album at the 2014 Grammy Awards, scoring a surprise victory over country’s crossover queen Taylor Swift in both categories.

Kacey Musgraves probably gets fed up with being viewed as some kind of alt-country rebel, and the very idea of this petite young woman filling the shoes occupied by grizzled “outlaw” veterans like Willie Nelson and Waylon, is undoubtedly a strange one. But the fact is that *Same Trailer*, as it gets paraphrased, with songs proselytising gay relationships, smoking dope and bemoaning the fate of kids stuck in small town USA, highlighted sacrosanct subjects. You just don’t normally go there.

Even more surprising, given Clear Channel’s domination of the American airwaves, a station pumping out sanitised music

aimed at 35-year-old housewives baking buttermilk cookies, is that middle America took Kacey Musgraves into their collective hearts.

Now comes her new album *Pageant Material*, a photo of Kacey on the cover, hair teased into a high bouffant supporting a tiara; thank heavens the girl’s joking.

‘You can take me out of the country, but you can’t take the country out of me,’ she sings. Yes, we’ve all heard it before, but with small town America supplying the over riding themes for her songs, it’ll undoubtedly sell in truckloads.

Although she sounds unaffected by her fame – tours with Willie Nelson and Katy

Perry are among recent highlights – she’s a girl who’s certainly paid her dues. As a nine-year-old, she yodeled her way around the Golden Sweet Potato Festival in Texas on the back of a flatbed truck, and by the time she was 12 years old, was strutting her fringed jacket around the regional Opry circuit.

‘In Texas, every few towns have an “Opry” house,’ she explains, ‘and performers come up on stage and sing old

country songs with a live band, to get them used to being onstage and playing in front of an audience.’

What makes her success even more intriguing is that there’s nothing that startling about Kacey. Certainly she’s pretty, and is blessed with a





voice that recalls Dolly Parton's best years, but it can't have been easy. When she was 18, she moved to Austin, and after appearing on the Nashville Star TV talent show, hit the road to Music City where she started out by acting as a singing Cinderella at kid's parties. 'When I first started writing my own songs, they were pretty bad,' she admits, 'but I hadn't found my creative voice and by throwing my songs out there, it made me gradually get better.'

So when you first arrived in Nashville, how difficult was it for you to get a foot in the door? 'It took a little while, hanging around with some writers, and gradually trying to get my own songs better. I would take my little demo around all the publishing houses in town – they're always looking for new voices – and say, "Hey, I'm a new singer-songwriter in town looking for any work. If you can pay me to sing on any demos that would be great, and these are my songs." So I was killing two birds with one stone, making the rounds and putting names to faces; it was a fun community too.'

For anyone with experience of the UK music industry – it's even difficult to drop an unsolicited CD into the London label office – such ease of access would be a revelation.

'Nashville is a pretty easy going town where a lot of word of mouth stuff goes on,' she says.

'It's a small town, and if you're doing something unique, I think word can get around pretty fast. There are a lot of musicians hanging out there, but you just have to find your tribe, your niche, and run with those people. Up until then it can be difficult, and it did take a few years until I met the people that I could really get along with; you just have to keep yourself out there. There're stereotypes of course, but I was lucky to find people I enjoyed writing with.'

Although her early flatbed truck performances indulged her mother's love of bluegrass, she admits to being a fan of most types of music. 'Anything that makes me feel good all over speaks to me, it really doesn't matter what genre. Growing up, my dad would play classic rock like Neil Young and Tom Petty, and my mum was playing bluegrass. Then there'd be the stuff your friends were listening to; it was all a big mix.'

So when you came up with the songs for *Same Trailer*, were you consciously hitting on subjects that you knew might prove controversial? 'No, I never tried to say anything just for the sake of it. If someone's being weird for the sake of being weird, or being arty for the sake of being arty, it kind of negates the whole point. I was aware that all of my ideas might not sit well with every single person that

heard them, but at the same time that was also kind of the point; it wasn't supposed to be 100 per cent digestible by everyone. To have done that wouldn't have lent itself to the creation process; I just wanted to come up with something that made me feel good as a songwriter, take little pieces of life that had really made an impact on me, and write about them.'

On 'Follow Your Arrow', you sing, "If you ain't got two kids by 21, you're probably going to die alone, that's what tradition told me..." For people who do live in a trailer park and work as a waitress in a Shoney's, surely this is dangerous ground? 'It's true and a lot of times my songs do have an observational message; but I'd never want anybody to think I'm pointing a finger. I'm going through life as a 26-year-old who grew up in a small town, getting to see the world, and figuring everything out. It's not coming from a preachy point of view, just that I've got more than a one-dimensional look at life than where I'm from. It's really important to look at things in that way, whether you've grown up as a Kardashian – or me!' she laughs.

So given that thanks to Waylon Jennings and his gang, there's nothing unusual about writing songs extolling the virtues of smoking dope – how do your references about gay marriage go down with the establishment?

'Nobody cares,' she says thankfully. 'The music industry and Nashville is basically run by gay people, so they embrace it. Nashville's one of the first places to have a pretty big gay scene in the South. It surprised me, but they're some really great drag bars which, being that it's an arty city, makes sense. But one of my best high school friends came out to me when I was a kid, and I realised that he'd gone through his whole life until then, not being able to be who he wanted to be. It made me want to sing about those kind of things, and decide that was the type of music I wanted to make. I've always wanted my songs to be just about life, and one of my favourite things about country music that drew me to the genre in the first place is that it's not catering to anyone other than real people, people that are working jobs, having kids, going through relationships and making mistakes. Sure there's some drinking and dope, but that is country music to me and I never wanted to be limited by any subject matter.'

Kacey's new album *Pageant Material* feels more mainstream in its topics, but is still looks to downtown USA for inspiration. 'I didn't have much of a concept other than to try and come up with some good songs,' she admits. 'I think *Pageant Material* sets a good tone, and I tried to be a little different with my approach to the recording. I've been touring extensively for the last few years, getting to know more about

myself, experiencing other cultures, and it was easier this time to go in and think, "OK - this is exactly what I want to sound like". We didn't have as much studio time to play with - as a second record I guess that's the way it goes - but with *Same Trailer* there was a lot more overdubbing, piecing together everything after recording.'

Pageant Material was recorded in RCA's Studio A - a cavernous space once owned by Chet Atkins, and a space that has seen everyone from Elvis Presley to Dolly Parton and the Beach Boys walk its hallowed ground.

'There was this amazing mojo floating around in there, pretty inspiring, and I really wanted to capture the live spirit of musicians playing together in a room, the way all the old records I love, and listen to, were made,' she enthuses. 'All the guitars were vintage; a '59 gut string Martin and lots of old Gibsons - they don't make 'em like they used to!'

You're a big fan of John Prine apparently? 'I love John Prine,' she gushes. 'When I first heard him, it was like, "Oh my god, this guy's so witty and clever". He puts over a lot of social commentary in a very smart way. I love his fingerpicking too - and I've learned how to do that. As far as songwriting goes, he set the standard, and he keeps things very conversational - and that's very hard to do. I just try to think how would John Prine say this?'

**Kacey Musgraves' *Pageant Material* is out now.
www.kaceymusgraves.com**

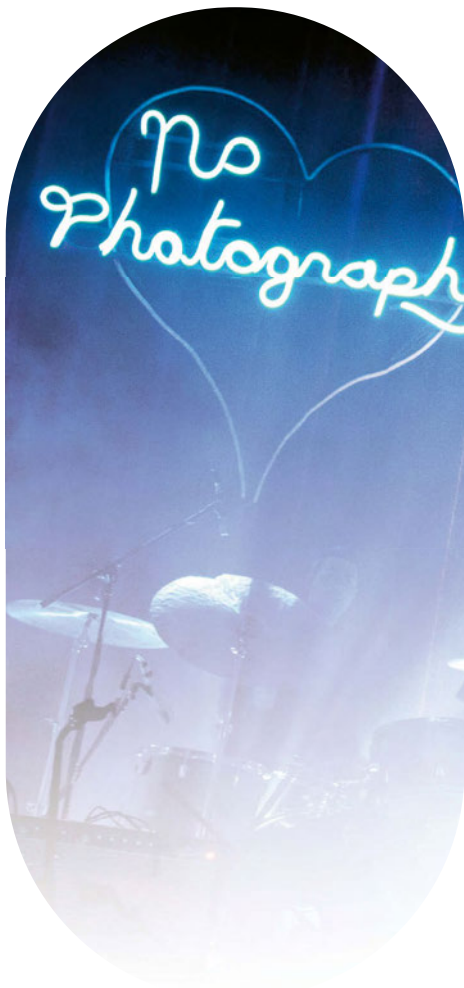




PLAY MISTY FOR ME

WORDS: TERI SACCONI IMAGES: EMMA TILLMAN & BRAD MOORE

He's been a solo folkster, a drummer with Fleet Foxes, and a drug-addled heavy drinker. Now, as Father John Misty, he levels with Acoustic about the eternal truths on the beguiling **I Love You, Honeybear** – the transformative epic where Joshua Tillman ends and Father John Misty begins...



I'll admit it, I'm feeling slightly anxious contemplating my interview with the exceedingly talented and equally bright Father John Misty – the artist formerly known as J Tillman, a.k.a. Joshua Tillman. I confess my apprehension to his publicist who tells me, 'Don't worry. He's too clever for everyone. He's too clever... full stop.'

Fortunately, Tillman proves to be as charming as ever. Tellingly, he admits that doing interviews can make him feel uptight (which could explain the frustration I've noticed in some interviews he's done in the past). His artistic eclecticism is evidenced not only in his changing nomenclatures but also varying musical styles. Tillman was an indie folk-rock solo artist in the early 2000s who was mentored by none other than Damien Jurado. Then Tillman abruptly switched gears to play drums with Fleet Foxes in 2008 – a stint which lasted until 2012.

Now his alt etherealism via Father John Misty is his singular focus. His latest release *I Love You, Honeybear* delves deep into marital bliss and is proving to be another well-received endeavour. It's a natural step forward from 2012's hallucinogen fuelled *Fear Fun*. The new album features generous orchestrations with horns and strings. Yet beyond the instrumental

lushness, *I Love You, Honeybear* retains an acoustic guitar nucleus, replete with Tillman's propensity for open tunings. The Father takes artistic risks once again and succeeds splendidly. Now, Misty's vulnerabilities have no hiding place as he's exposed himself lyrically like never before. Whatever the pseudonym or incarnation, Tillman's music seems utterly reactive (to societal conventions, his fundamentalist Christian upbringing, what's expected of a rock star, and commitment). It appears that his reinventions are clearly part of his evolution both artistically and personally.

Tillman certainly seems to be at the height of his powers. His voice is more confident and visceral now – and his live shows these days are celebratory. In conversation, he proves to be eminently quotable, funny, self-deprecating and a lovable rogue indeed. But first things first, how should I address him? 'I'm just Josh,' he retorts with a smile.

Singer-songwriter Jonathan Wilson – who produced *Fear Fun* – produced *I Love You, Honeybear*. This project was a departure in that *I Love You, Honeybear* is layered in orchestration, yet you chose Jonathan to produce again. It worked out again, so I guess it was a no-brainer?

Pretty much, because it wasn't something I thought too much about. As much as I can minimise my own technical participation in a project the better because I'm not an engineer by any stretch of the imagination. With Jonathan, there's a great rapport and he brings so much humanity to the projects, which is very important to me, and he understands all the technical aspects that I don't. He's an amazing guy who happens to be my friend so there was no deliberation involved.

Was the lush instrumentation on this album something you envisioned before entering the studio or did it happen in the sessions?

All these songs started to manifest themselves early on – the songs grew to how they are organically. I'm not technically skilled enough to shoehorn my songs into a particular aesthetic. They are devotional songs and the way they're produced seemed to be the only way to go with them.

You've indicated that your lyrics are paramount in your music – and that is something that many of your fans would agree with. You certainly utilise word play well.

I do, and a certain type of lyric gives you the ability to sing with a certain melody. Take



'Chateau Lobby #4 (in C for Two Virgins)' for example – a sweet, lilting romantic melody while the lyrics bring some levity to offset that sweetness. Meanwhile, the gritty lyrics on 'The Night Josh Tillman Came To Our Apartment' is an example where the acidic, abrasive lyrics are offset by the bouncy soulless melody. Sometimes both the lyrics and music emerge simultaneously to form vitality. That's what I aim for: vitality. Sometimes there will be a chord sequence and a melody I've been absent-mindedly batting around in my head for months. But by the time I come up with the lyrics, the melody will be completely different. That's why songwriting isn't just singing poetry. It's why so much music is boring – and you have to be conscious that words really have a melodic content. Or a story has a parallel in the melodic universe. I think the best songwriters know how to tease out just the right melody from a sequence of words.

You describe songwriting as a skill rather than strictly an art. Have you become better at this process?

I think so. I've definitely expanded the things I'm interested in writing about and have been shedding some personal layers. I've also changed a lot as a singer drastically since I was 21 because singing is such a profoundly

psychological act. You don't have just this one voice that you come out of the womb with. If you're going to sing well, you need to have access to the most truthful aspects of yourself. If you turn on a TV singing show it's people doing karaoke. But to sing something truthfully and to sing something real, it has to come from a deep place. It's not about technical aspects. I found that getting past a lot of layers of self-loathing has helped me as a singer tremendously. And the singing between this record and the last one shows a lot of growth. A lyric like "fuck the world..." is fairly visceral so it demands a certain vocal approach. The reason I sang the way I did when I was younger makes sense: there was very little personal truth in it so there was little at stake. It was so weighed down with affectation. My goal as a singer is to be just a male voice. It sounds pedantic, but it makes sense to me.

Since you are not beholden to a singular persona or style – or even instrument – I presume that for you boredom equals death?

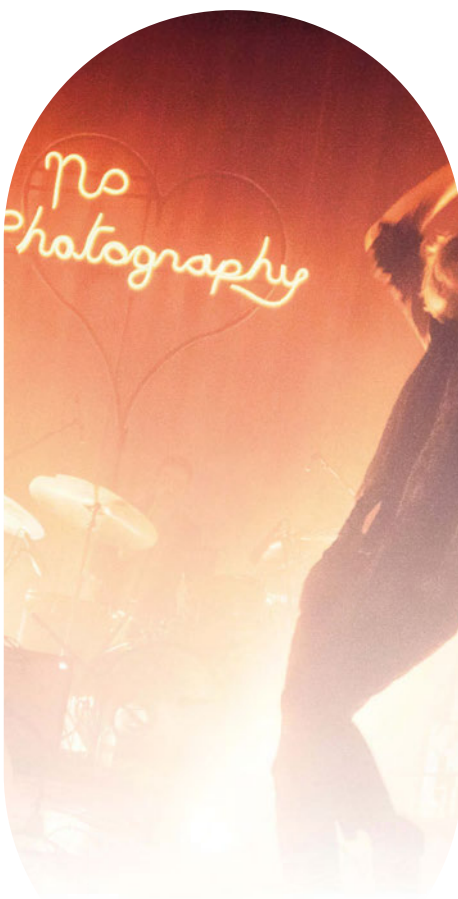
You could say that. It's just fun for me to reinvent myself.

Do you have any misgivings or reluctance about laying out some of the intimate aspects of your marriage on this album?

Yes. At first I was terrified of putting it all out there. A lot of it was pure vanity about not wanting to be unmasked. Ironically, I guess it's the same in a relationship in that intimacy unmasks you. It's humbling too. I think with this album there are borderline character assassinations of myself. Intimacy is totally revealing and I tried to articulate that with the album cover art too. When I put out the press release, I said it was a concept album. These are devotional songs. The whole point of the album is the process of transformation where Josh Tillman doesn't exist anymore. I have to play a painful, embarrassing role at this point in my life. A song like 'Strange Encounter' is a role I'm playing at this point in my life, but there were definitely misgivings going into this. But it's just part of the job; being in a public forum. Interpretation is okay with me. I think they should be dissected and taken apart upon repeated listening. 'The Night Josh Tillman Came To Our Apartment' demands to be interpreted and dissected. On first listening, the song sounds like the girl is awful but it's really my character who is the judgemental, self-righteous one who looks for validation from strangers.

Did your wife mind that you focused so much on your relationship?





No, Emma was really keen in helping me get over that and she said, "Look, you can't be afraid to let these songs be beautiful".

Your music during the J Tillman period is still beloved by many of your followers but you seem to want to distance yourself from it.

No, I'm okay talking about it. I've had to throw that material under the bus to do what I do now. But I'm proud of quite a bit of that stuff and I appreciate what it was. Although I put out a whole bunch of albums that no one really paid attention to for years. I've been called "extremely self-motivated" by people close to me for sticking with it over the lean years. That music was far more impressionistic and was intended to be a cathartic listen, whereas now it's more of an intellectual listen. I wasn't a different person then but my music was very different and I felt a personal mandate to bring my music with an alignment to who I am today.

How do you capture your musical ideas?

Most of the time, it starts with me turning off all the lights – I get a knife and start stabbing myself until an idea comes... No, but I do start with a guitar. This time, I used a notebook to write my lyrics down for the first time. A melody comes pretty quickly with the words. I go through writer's block sometimes, but I always have a hyper-mythologised way of

remembering it as some kind of artistic ecstasy. It's more like I pick up a guitar because I'm supposed to and then something comes out that doesn't want to make you vomit. So you work on it for months until it's done. I do work in concentrated fits where I'll stay up for three days at a stretch. So sleeplessness is part of my process. My muse has always dragged me kicking and screaming.

You toiled under the radar somewhat until your "breakthrough" in 2012 with *Fear Fun*...

I like making a fool out of myself whether it's being the drummer or lead singer...

You paint, make music, and pursue creativity as you desire, yet you came from such a strict religious upbringing where your parents raised you devoid of any secular or cultural pursuits. I suppose you became an artist despite that childhood – or maybe because of it?

Evangelical Christianity has this really intense emphasis on what you're thinking as opposed to what you are doing. As far as my household was concerned, my parents were involved in the church heavily, although not professionally. It just wasn't a good experience. It was oppressive and I was really frustrated and angry trying to address the reaction to my youth. In my 20s, I re-engaged my pre-adolescent state where I painted just because

I wanted to – and the same with music. I did it just for fun. But my music from my 20s was quite cathartic and it was a rejection of my upbringing. I'm aware that I was a person in conflict – and that's where all of it comes from.

Despite marital bliss, you still seem to retain some cynicism. 'Bored In the USA' (a caustic barb at middle class life) among other songs on *Honeybear* hint toward this...

I don't equate love and intimacy with optimism. In fact, my next album will put that worry aside. I will be glad to move on to the next project and I'm looking forward to the way this album sits in the whole body of work. I'm not sure this is a precedent for what's to come.

You were a solo artist then a drummer and now a frontman. Do you like having the focus solely on you?

Let's put it this way: I find it easy to make a fool out of myself in different ways. I find a lot of the stuff involved in being a musician absurd. I often feel stupid, but I try to just follow my instincts for the most part and sometimes when I follow my instincts people may find it entertaining.

Father John Misty's I Love You, Honeybear is out now via Bella Union.

www.fatherjohnmisty.com

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GREENFIELD GF



From his state-of-the-art workshop in Montreal, Michael Greenfield's one-build-at-a-time guitars have found their way into the hands of suchlike-string luminaries as Keith Richards, Andy McKee and Tony McManus.

Stephen Bennett takes on the Greenfield GF – a performance-level, luthier-built instrument without the more ornate appointments (and price tag) of Michael Greenfield's custom order models.

There's a line from an Ian Banks novel that says, "She was so far out of my league, I couldn't even speak to her, let alone ask her out". First encounters with the finest examples of modern luthiery conjure similar sentiments but all sense of fumbling inhibition falls away when it becomes clear that, as with people, the really classy ones always prove the most immediately friendly and accessible. So it is with the Greenfield GF.

If we really are in a golden age of guitar making, Canada (though the Bay Area crew may well argue) must be its El Dorado, with Greenfield seated prominently in a raft of high-end builders (Manzer, Laskin, de Jonge, Wren et al) all of whom can trace a guideline of inspiration back to the work of Jean Larrivée.

From his state-of-the-art workshop in Montreal, Michael Greenfield's one-build-at-a-time guitars have found their way into the hands of suchlike-string luminaries as Keith Richards, Andy McKee and Tony McManus, forging a reputation along the way for power and richness of tone as well as an exquisite finish that's rarely matched even at the very highest level. He's an acknowledged master of fan-fretting and multi-scale fingerboards and a keen advocate of any ergonomic, design tweakage that might increase comfort for the player; bevels, in particular – arm, palm and rib.



GREENFIELD GF

NEED TO KNOW

Manufacturer: Greenfield

Model: GF

Retail Price: £10,250

Body Size: G1 body shape / Grand concert

Made In: Canada

Top: Adirondack spruce

Back and Sides: Ziricote

Neck: Mahogany

Fingerboard: Ebony

Frets: 21

Tuners: Gotoh G10

Nut Width: 1-3/4"

Scale Length: 650mm

Strings Fitted: John Pearse

Gig Bag/Case Included: Custom fit

Mainstage flight case

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

Pros: Stunning build from one of the world's finest guitar makers; revered for

Cons: Nothing to report

Overall: Value for money is always going to be a subjective issue, no-one's going to question a Stradivarius violin's value for money, the same thinking should apply here.

ACOUSTIC RATING

Sound Quality: ★★★★★

Build Quality: ★★★★★

Value for Money: ★★★★★

5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless.

4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat.

3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.

2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

CONTACT DETAILS:

The North American Guitar

www.thenorthamericanguitar.com

This GF is, rather amusingly, regarded as Greenfield's "stripped-down" model. Relative, one imagines to his various "dressed-up" options and something akin to Ferrari offering a base model Dino. The "basics" here constitute Ziricote back and sides, the colour spilling from rich, dark chocolate into a burnished, Jaffa Cake amber flash, under a creamy-pale Adirondack spruce top. These woods are a recent upgrade. GFs were originally only offered in Indian Rosewood or mahogany with Sitka tops but the menu now includes cocobolo, Amazon rosewood and moon-harvested Swiss spruce (cut on the shortest day of winter, since you ask, when the sap is lowest and in keeping with ancient and exacting lunar-cyclic tradition) all with or without Florentine cutaway. Here, though, the one-piece mahogany neck is finished with ebony heel-cap at one end and at the other, Gotoh G10 tuners with a toothy-looking bone nut that's nicely complemented by the pinless, ebony bridge. Perhaps the only major adornment – and even that's subtle – is in the glowing, chesnut warmth of a spalted maple rosette inspired by late-19th century Spanish classical patterns. Beyond that, as part of the cost-trimming exercise, the ebony binding has been left plain (though looks none the worse for it) and there's no back-of-headstock veneer. Greenfield's aim with this

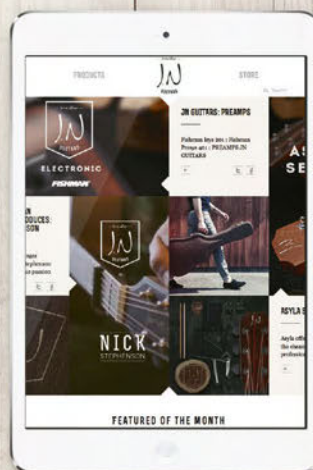
As marriages of form and function go, the GF would be almost impossible to beat. Though if that marriage sounds a wee bit unromantic, rest assured, you and the GF could probably spend a lifetime making beautiful music together.

"production" range is to rethink the build process from scratch. The GF is a fundamentally different animal from his half-as-much-again top line. While it retains many of the familiar Greenfield appointments; same headstock (with magnetic truss-rod cover for ease of access) and that offset, Steve Klein-influenced bridge design, it's braced and built differently from his bespoke one-offs; the implication being that the time and money is being saved on the inside to preserve the overall aesthetic (however simple) and finish on the out.

On which note, give the ordinary bloke in the street a kitchen full of the finest ingredients and he won't necessarily produce a gourmet banquet. Greenfield, on the other hand, probably would – he's also a renowned and highly skilled chef. Working now with tonewoods as his current "milieu", he's keen to debunk the accepted wisdom that the choice thereof means the job's already half-done. Wrong. Only a proper chef can blend those ingredients into something this tasty. Certainly, better woods offer better response and stability but Greenfield, as any genuine luthier would be, is adamant that qualities of bass, treble and sustain are functions of the build not the wood and that today's buyer is too readily seduced by fashionably arcane and often spurious wood-lore. We tend to forget that while the back and sides are more about the sonic "colour" of the instrument, it's the top of the guitar – the soundboard – that delivers over 75 per cent of the sound.

Construction mysteries notwithstanding, the real eye-opener here comes in the playing and (though dressed in the most demure of sheep's clothing) the GF's a real beast. From some deep and hidden vault of luthiery magic, it conjures huge volume from its compact body; the player could nod off waiting for the sustain to die out, even from the highest notes.

One concern, especially with smaller-bodied instruments, is the voice (again, as with people) will become



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PLAY FROM THE SOUL

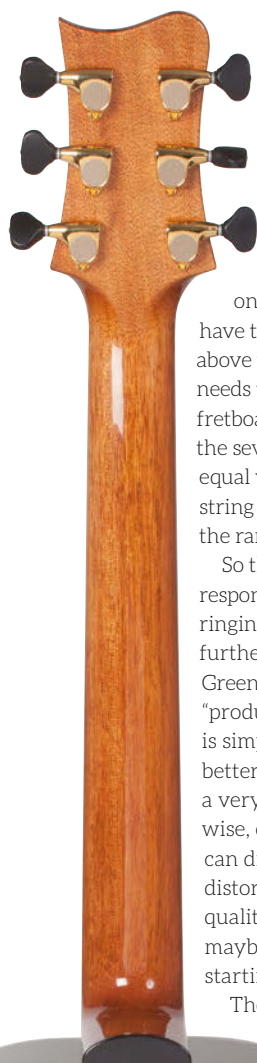
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less articulate the louder it gets. That's not the case here. There's no danger of the GF overpowering itself as the "headroom" (how loud you can get before the guitar starts to complain, basically) seems limitless. The distortion-free clarity remains. Greenfield believes that great trebles make for a great guitar, so he focusses on that aspect primarily on all his instruments. Those high notes have to be fat, round and "present", especially above the body-joint, where the volume needs to be consistent with other notes on the fretboard. His goal is to produce a high A at the seventeenth fret of the first string that has equal volume and resonance with the open fifth string – something (so far, at least) way beyond the range of mass production.

So the question arises; here's a beautifully responsive, effortlessly playable instrument ringing up £10,250 (with an extra grand for further upgrades) at the till – so why buy a Greenfield "workshop" guitar when the GF "production model" is this good? The answer is simple; the workshop models are even better – but then we're talking in degrees at a very high level of quality. Besides, price-wise, comparisons with factory-made guitars can distort the buyer's thinking (it certainly distorts the market). With a great orchestra-quality violin or cello costing up to \$100,000, maybe it's a case of the guitar world finally starting to catch up.

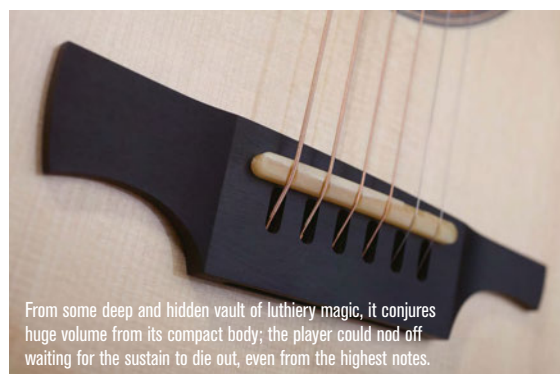
The GF is, indeed, simple when judged by Greenfield standards. The workshop models will have had more work put into them, they'll be bigger, fuller, braced differently and have more elaborate appointments. By contrast, the GF dispenses with anything that's not essential to the delivery of its amazing sound. As marriages of form and function go, it would be almost impossible to beat.

Though if that marriage sounds a wee bit unromantic, rest assured, you and the GF could probably spend a lifetime making beautiful music together.

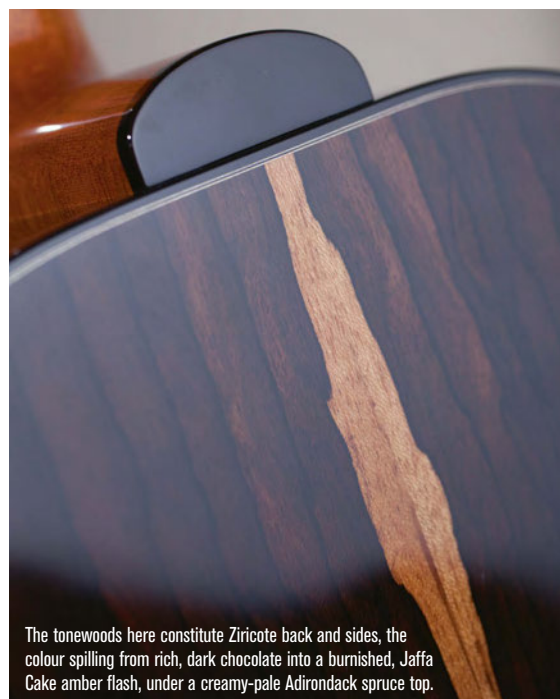
Stephen Bennett



Construction mysteries notwithstanding, the real eye-opener here comes in the playing and (though dressed in the most demure of sheep's clothing) the GF's a real beast.



From some deep and hidden vault of luthiery magic, it conjures huge volume from its compact body; the player could nod off waiting for the sustain to die out, even from the highest notes.



The tonewoods here constitute Zircote back and sides, the colour spilling from rich, dark chocolate into a burnished, Jaffa Cake amber flash, under a creamy-pale Adirondack spruce top.

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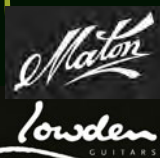
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YAMAHA SILENT GUITARS

David Mead explores the sound of silence...

We've probably all been scolded at one time or another for late night practice sessions. The moment that the muse grants you unlimited access to your creative powers rarely arrives at a time that will suit everyone you happen to share your life with, after all. But housemates can now rest easy in their beds because Yamaha has the solution in hand – and a very elegant and well considered one it is, too.

The concept behind Yamaha's renowned Silent Guitar Series is as profoundly simple as it is highly ingenious. If you take away the soundbox of either a classical or a steel string acoustic and provide a tip-top array of electronic wizardry in the form of an onboard preamp packed full of useful sounds instead, you're free to fully indulge your inspiration in private at any time of the day or night.

YAMAHA SLG200N

The SLG range comes in two basic formats: nylon string classical or steel string acoustic. There are various finish options along the way, not to mention the all-new SRT preamp that promises studio quality sound for either practice, stage or recording.

BUILD QUALITY

We'll begin by looking at the nylon string version of the Silent Guitar. When it first arrived it came housed in a custom gig bag so slender that I would imagine no airline could possibly question its carry-on status. This is because the upper part of the guitar's open frame is stowed separately from the main body of the instrument and locks into place with a twist of the strap pegs fore and aft. Once assembled, it looks to me like a piece of modern sculpture with the graceful and easily recognisable lines of a



The outer frame is made from a ply of rosewood and maple with a solid mahogany leg rest on the underside to facilitate playing in a sitting position. The central core is mahogany too and not only holds everything together, but also houses the SRT Preamp and the various outputs.



As an overview, the SRT controls comprise a power button, volume, treble and bass plus a chromatic tuner and built-in effects that include reverb and chorus. There's also an auxiliary input for linking up to an MP3 or CD.



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YAMAHA SLG200S

TO KNOW

Manufacturer: Yamaha
Model: SLG200S
Retail Price: £515
Body Size: Modified folk cutaway
Made In: China
Body: Mahogany
Frame: Rosewood and maple
Neck: Mahogany
Fingerboard: Rosewood
Frets: 22
Turners: Chrome sealed back
Nut Width: 43mm
Scale Length: 634mm
Onboard Electronics: SRT Preamp
Strings Fitted: .012 - .052
Gig Bag/Case Included: Custom gig bag

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

Pros: Your personal steel-string studio
Cons: Straight piezo sounds a little bland
Overall: Practice, travel and perhaps performance all in one instrument

ACOUSTIC RATING

Sound Quality: ★★★★★
Build Quality: ★★★★★
Value for Money: ★★★★★
5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless.
4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat.
3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.
2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Yamaha UK
www.yamahamusiclondon.com

include reverb and chorus. There's also an auxiliary input for linking up to an MP3 or CD and a jack plug socket so you can employ an amplifier for stage use.

So far so good, but how much of an authentic sound are you going to get from a guitar without a body? Surely the lack of tonewoods is going to become an issue somewhere down the line? Well, Yamaha has thought this one through and provided a solution in the form of a modelling system sculptured upon a high-end Yamaha acoustic and top of the range microphone. The company has been experimenting with instrument and microphone modelling for some years – anyone remember the excellent AG Stomp Acoustic Preamp, for instance? So they have something of a proven track record in this quarter and it's the same sort of technology that is in use here.

SOUNDS AND PLAYABILITY

Of the two, the 200N has the softer acoustic sound, the 200S sounding a little bit louder than an unamplified electric guitar. Both would be excellent for maintaining a good relationship with neighbours and cohabitants as acoustically

they emit only a whisper. In order to get them to roar, you'll need either a pair of headphones or an amplifier.

Accessing the SRT via headphones, you have the choice of using the modelling on a sliding scale where with the rotary pot far left you are hearing pure piezo. At the opposite end, it's full-on simulation and it's up to the individual to find their own personal sweet spot.

Effects-wise there are two types of reverb that sound like "room" and "hall" plus chorus, but you can only dial up one effect at a time. With the SRT on piezo only, the sound on both instruments is quite basic and where it might be good for a bit of practice, it really wouldn't cut it in a live scenario. But switch in the modeller and the timbre changes quite dramatically; everything becomes instantly fuller and more resonant as it might do on an instrument with a set of fine body woods. The combination of modelling and reverb gives you quite a lot of parameters to play with



Switch in the modeller and the timbre changes quite dramatically; everything becomes instantly fuller and more resonant as it might do on an instrument with a set of fine body woods.

and I suspect that most players would be able to locate a sound that was suitable for rehearsal with no problem at all. Of the two, I found the nylon string sound a little more authentic – and by that token possibly more useful – than its steel string counterpart.

The other possibility here is to output both guitars via an amp and a perfect pairing would be with the Yamaha THR5A, which is a superbly well thought out and useful device offering a staggering amount of sonic variations and recording possibilities, and so I don't doubt that they're absolutely right. The amplified voice of the SLGs is much like I heard via headphones; careful adjustment of the SRT will open up a range of sounds and the modeller will ably make up for the lack of body woods present in the manufacture. If I was going to criticise anything at all, I'd say that the hall reverb is a little too expansive and lacks an ability to tame it, but I think I would opt to use my own reverb facilities in a live situation. For practising, what's here is more than adequate.

CONCLUSION

There's no doubt that the SLG range is an asset to any player for whom practising amid the turbulence of modern domestic life has become a problem. These instruments will keep the peace but still allow regular bouts of fretboard activity irrespective of the time of day. As rehearsal tools, they're also a complete boon as the portability factor couldn't really be any better for a full size instrument. It's possible that many players would opt to go the more conventional tonewoods'n'all route for live performance, but there's plenty here to recommend the SLGs in a concert setting.

David Mead



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YAMAHA SLG200N

NEED TO KNOW

Manufacturer: Yamaha

Model: SLG200N

Retail Price: £515

Body Size: Modified classical cutaway

Made In: China

Body: Mahogany

Frame: Rosewood and maple

Neck: Mahogany

Fingerboard: Rosewood

Frets: 19

Tuners: Open gear classical style

Nut Width: 50mm

Scale Length: 650mm

Onboard Electronics: SRT Preamp

Strings Fitted: Yamaha nylon classical

Gig Bag/Case Included: Custom gig bag

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

Pros: Portability and peace on earth!

Cons: Slightly inflexible reverb

Overall: As a practice tool there really is very little on the market to compare

ACOUSTIC RATING

Sound Quality: ★★★★★

Build Quality: ★★★★★

Value for Money: ★★★★★

5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless.

4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat.

3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.

2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

traditional cutaway acoustic, but that's just about where any familiarity ends.

Normally at this point I would be waxing lyrical about the tonewoods, but that isn't really appropriate in this case! Instead, the outer frame is made from a ply of rosewood and maple with a solid mahogany leg rest on the underside to facilitate playing in a sitting position. The central core is mahogany too and not only holds everything together, but also houses the SRT Preamp and the various outputs.

The finish is what Yamaha refer to as "satin" and on this model the grain of the various woods is neatly highlighted. As I have mentioned, there are other options available, including translucent black and tobacco sunburst if this particular rendering isn't to your taste. Personally, I like it.

There's a little pickguard made from black plastic which, if you think about it, maintains another acoustic guitar tradition and doesn't look in the least out of place here. It's mahogany for the neck with a shallow but wide profile which will make any player used to a straightforward classical guitar feel pretty much at home.

The slotted headstock plays host to a pair of three-a-side open gear tuners and there's a truss rod cover set in the centre. Yamaha has been fitting truss rods to models in their nylon string range for ages, offering players a bit more control over the straightness of the necks. As such, it's possible for a much lower action than you would normally find on a classical guitar – something I welcome as it makes the instrument more playable, especially if your nylon string meanderings don't necessarily sketch the standard classical repertoire. In other words, if you're used to the sort of actions you find on steel-string acoustics, you're going to feel welcome here!

YAMAHA SLG200S

As the two models I have in front of me have identical preamps on board, I think it is more appropriate for me to address both models' sound quality together, otherwise I might end up repeating myself overmuch and we don't really want that to happen...



The guitars come housed in a custom gig bag so slender that no airline could possibly question carry-on status.

BUILD QUALITY

Unsurprisingly, these two models are extremely similar both in terms of look and construction details. Noticeable differences include a slightly shorter scale length on the 200S, but this is offset by the fact that here the neck joins the "body" at the 14th fret instead of the 12th. Strangely, when I hold both instruments back to back, the S is just a tad taller than its sibling, but essentially the two are as close as makes no difference in terms of general looks.

So the outer frame of the 200S is made from the same rosewood and maple combo as before with a mahogany centre column tracing the body's length. A mahogany neck, rosewood board, sealed back tuners, nut and saddle both made from urea are all in order, the neck here being 43mm wide at the nut broadening out to 55mm at the 14th fret. The profile is slender but substantial enough in the hand to make everything feel just about right. Apart from that, these two could almost be mistaken for twins.

But of course, the actual construction details of Yamaha's Silent Guitars is really only half of the story. Their real cachet is in the circuitry that brings these beasts to life.

THE SRT PREAMP

The thing about the SLGs is that they are perhaps aimed at private practice first and foremost. Along the way though Yamaha has realised that one or two players might like to take advantage of the instruments' portability and actually use them on gigs. As such, both activities are ably catered for in the run of things.

As an overview, the SRT controls comprise a power button, volume, treble and bass plus a chromatic tuner and built-in effects that



TAYLOR 214CE DLX



Overall construction quality is as good as it's ever been with Taylor. For a laminate wood guitar, I'd have a hard time being able to figure that out without looking at the spec sheets.

Alun Lower gets to grips with a relatively entry level Taylor – and one with bags of high-end appeal and the new Expression System 2 pickup

Taylor's 200 series has long represented an affordable gateway into the company's extensive and ever-desirable range of instruments.

But while these guitars have always boasted wonderful tones and playability, their looks alone have always edged more towards the simpler, less glamorous end of the spectrum. So Taylor has naturally taken the logical step and given the 200 series a bit of shake in order to up their visual desirability. The sticking point, however, is balancing the visual embellishments with the guitar's overall value. At £1,242, that's a tricky thing to do, and the natural question to arise is just how much can you charge for a guitar that technically features laminate wood back and sides?

BUILD QUALITY

One thing's for sure, that laminate wood – or layered – construction is just about the only contentious point to be found anywhere in the construction of the 214ce DLX. A relatively "entry-level" guitar this may be, but it's the archetypal Taylor in so many ways and as a guitar geek I can't help but feel an awful lot of fondness for it straight away. Much like the regular 214ce, you've got a classic combination of solid Sitka spruce and layered rosewood, partnered with a sapele neck topped with an ebony fingerboard and a rosewood veneer on the face of the headstock. This DLX model also sports a slightly flatter,



TAYLOR 214CE DLX

NEED TO KNOW

Manufacturer: Taylor

Model: 214ce DLX

Retail Price: £1,242

Body Size: Grand Auditorium

Made In: Mexico

Top: Solid Sitka spruce

Back and Sides: Layered rosewood

Neck: Sapele

Fingerboard: Ebony

Frets: 20

Tuners: Chrome

Nut Width: 1-11/16"

Scale Length: 25.5"

Onboard Electronics: Taylor Expression System 2

Strings Fitted: Elixir Phosphor Bronze Light

Gig Bag/Case Included: Deluxe hardshell

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

Pros: The awesome Expression System 2 means this guitar is ready to go for the live performer

Cons: Layered wood back and sides might mean people seek an alternative in the same price range

Overall: Great guitar with bags of high-end appeal and it's one of Taylor's most versatile body shapes. Oh, did we mention the price and the hard case?

ACOUSTIC RATING

Sound Quality: ★★★★★

Build Quality: ★★★★★

Value for Money: ★★★★★

5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless.

4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat.

3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.

2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Taylor Guitars

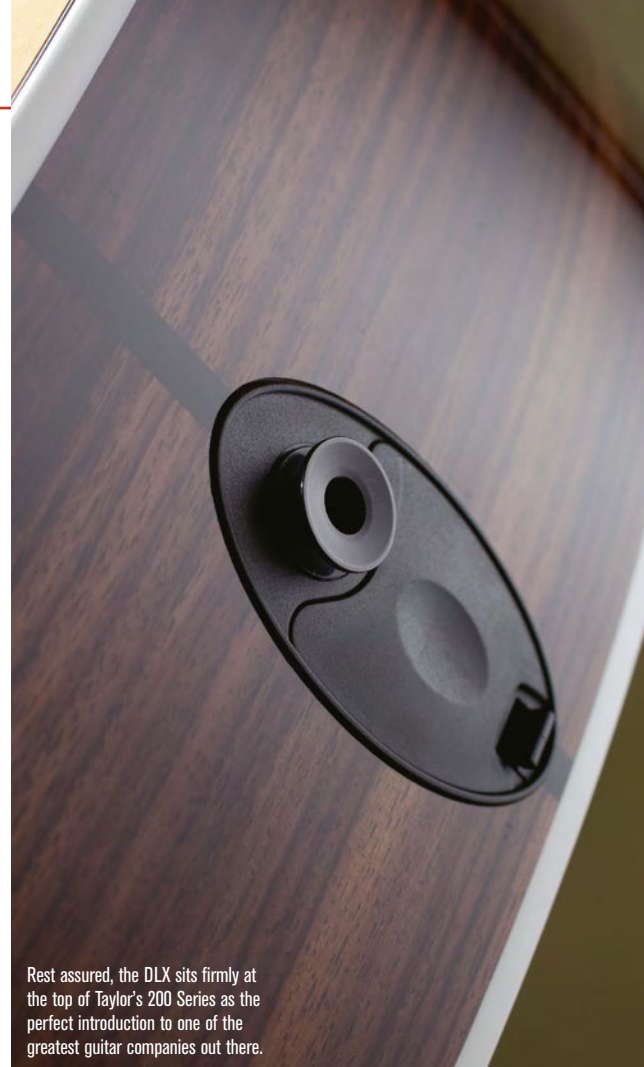
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Venetian-style cutaway – a neat little difference on the higher end models that looks pretty smart and modern.

It's not long before the rest of the DLX's premier appointments begin to make themselves known. For starters, there's the finishing. Where the regular 214 features a satin coat across the neck, back and sides of the body, the DLX features an upgraded gloss finish across the entire body and a more open, porous satin finish on the neck for a nicely tactile, natural feel. It sounds frivolous on paper, but in the hand, the guitar really does feel like a step up and the neck undoubtedly benefits from a greater playing experience. Other cosmetic touches include the upgrade to small diamond inlays, and a rosewood truss rod cover. The back has also been upgraded from a single-piece laminate wood to a two-piece, upping the visual appeal in line with the 300 series. The tuners have also received a slight upgrade from die-cast chrome to 100/200 chrome.

Overall construction quality is as good as it's ever been with Taylor. For a guitar with laminate wood, I'd have a hard time figuring that out without looking at the spec sheets, and it plays as well as any guitar costing in the region of £1,000 that you're ever likely to try with solid back and sides. Intonation and tuning

stability are exceptional even at this relatively low price point too. There really isn't anything to complain about – and the laminate or layered wood



Rest assured, the DLX sits firmly at the top of Taylor's 200 Series as the perfect introduction to one of the greatest guitar companies out there.

construction of the back and sides really makes no difference to the ear.

The biggest change to the guitar arguably comes in the form of the electronics, which have received an upgrade to the Expression System 2. This is actually a pretty big upgrade, being the system that appears on a large number of Taylor's higher end instruments as opposed to the ES-T, which appears on Taylor's lower end instruments such as the GS-Mini and 100 Series. It's this feature that marks the DLX a massive upgrade over the standard version.

SOUND QUALITY

Acoustically, the DLX really does sound excellent. The tone sits squarely in between the full depth and dynamics of a dreadnought and the tighter, more pronounced punch you get from smaller bodied instruments. It's balance personified – and exactly why after years of reviewing guitars it's fast become my favourite body shape for an all-rounder. The low-end is satisfyingly plummy when fingerpicked or as crisp as a cool autumn evening when flat-picked. Highs are bright and well-defined but lack perhaps a touch of harmonic complexity when put under the microscope – though all but the most experienced of ears will struggle to pick this out. On the flipside, the laminate wood construction aids projection well and results in a guitar that sounds great from the off but that will probably not mature in quite the same way as some of its rivals.

Really, this is the only place that the 214ce starts to struggle ever so slightly. The truth is that there are some fantastic guitars out there for £1,000 and under including the likes of Larrivée, Yamaha, Martin, and Faith (among others). Most of these rivals feature solid-construction too, adding the possibility of your tone improving and maturing over time as the wood ages and settles. This is an advantage that no layered wood guitar will ever

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truly trump in terms of outright acoustic performance, but the DLX does come very close indeed.

Plugged-in performance is where the Taylor picks up some of the slack – the tone is dependable and solid, offering a decent amount of adjustment and clarity. It's an excellent reproduction of the guitar's natural tone that proves this is a guitar that will see you through any gig and adapt itself to a million different applications. The ES2 is a revolutionary pickup design that reflects Taylor's perennial innovation in acoustic guitar amplification. The soul of the ES2 is Taylor's patented behind-the-saddle pickup, which features three uniquely positioned and individually calibrated pickup sensors. According to Taylor, the location of the sensors enables a more dynamic range of acoustic sound to be captured than ever before. Together with Taylor's custom-designed "professional audio"-grade preamp, this system produces exceptional amplified tone and responsiveness – team this with the trusted construction, hard case, and the price tag, and you've quickly got a real bargain on your hands.

CONCLUSION

The 214ce DLX is a truly great guitar. In terms of sheer build quality, sound quality, functionality, style and reliability, the guitar is up there with the best. And in terms of price, realistically you're going to see this guitar listed for a bit less than the RRP would suggest, just like any other guitar.

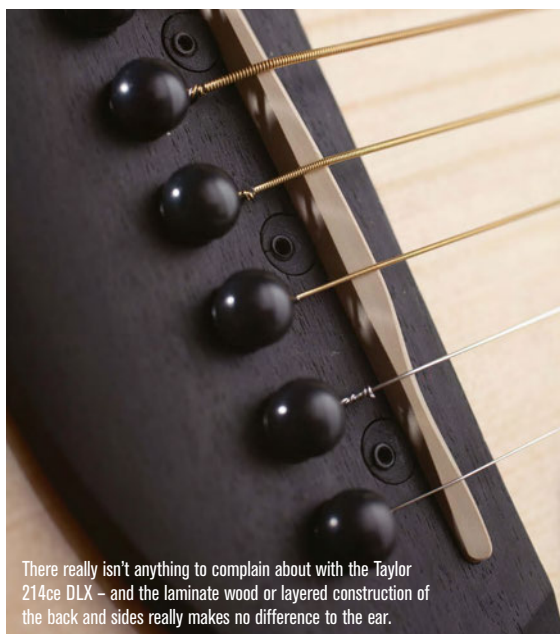
What's likely to be the deciding factor in a purchase decision here is you. If you came into this review thinking, "I want to buy a Taylor, is this one the right choice for me?" then the answer is an emphatic yes. It's a guitar loaded with high-end appeal, if you'll excuse the layered wood back and sides (which I do). I

love it and wouldn't hesitate to buy one for a second. Rest assured, the DLX sits firmly at the top of Taylor's 200 Series as the perfect introduction to one of the greatest guitar companies out there.

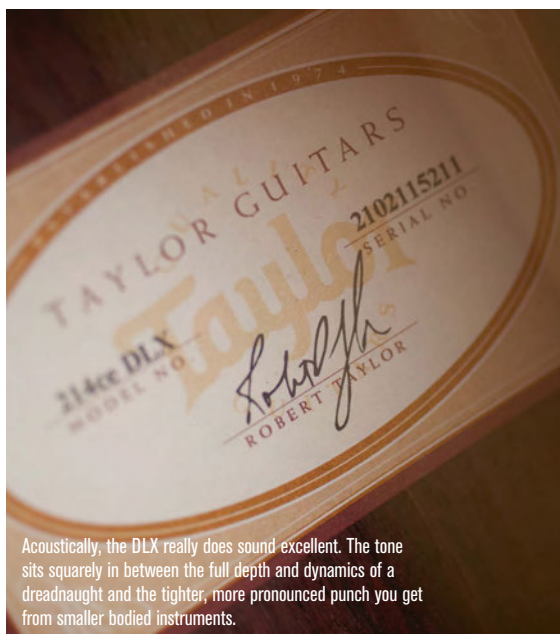
Alun Lower



The biggest change to the guitar arguably comes in the form of the electronics, which have received an upgrade to the Expression System 2. This is actually a pretty big upgrade, being the system that appears on a large number of Taylor's high-end instruments.



There really isn't anything to complain about with the Taylor 214ce DLX – and the laminate wood or layered construction of the back and sides really makes no difference to the ear.



Acoustically, the DLX really does sound excellent. The tone sits squarely in between the full depth and dynamics of a dreadnaught and the tighter, more pronounced punch you get from smaller bodied instruments.



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TANGLEWOOD TN5 SUPER FOLK



Tanglewood is due a hearty pat on the back for bringing yet another instrument to the marketplace that offers considerable quality at an amazing price.

An electro-acoustic plus case for £350? **David Mead** has the details...

We've seen plenty of instruments from Tanglewood in recent years, offering great value for money in the seriously overcrowded budget to mid-price guitar market. This particular model is part of the company's Nashville range and goes under the name of "TN5 SFCE" and I understand this translates to Tanglewood Nashville Five Super Folk Cutaway Electric, which I guess tells its own story. With a retail price of £350, the TN5 falls squarely into the entry level and so it will be interesting to see if Tanglewood has worked their magic once again...

BUILD QUALITY

This is another instance where an instrument has essentially been designed in the UK and built in China. As usual, I'm a little mystified by the designation "super folk" because it looks more like what a lot of companies refer to as "small jumbo" to me. In any case, the upper bout checks in at 290mm with the lower totalling 380mm and a waist of 240mm. Body depth starts at 90mm towards the neck and 100mm at the end pin. So now you know!

Beginning our tour with the guitar's top, it's spruce, but Tanglewood's spec doesn't tell me which exact type. However, it looks like a nice piece of timber with a good amount of feathering – or medullary rays if you





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TANGLEWOOD
TN5 SUPER FOLK

NEED TO KNOW

Manufacturer: Tanglewood**Model:** TN5 SFCE**Retail Price:** £349.95**Body Size:** Super Folk**Made In:** China**Top:** Spruce**Back and Sides:** African mahogany**Neck:** Mahogany**Fingerboard:** Rosewood**Frets:** 20**Tuners:** Enclosed black nickel**Nut Width:** 43mm**Scale Length:** 650mm**Onboard Electronics:** Tanglewood TEQ-3BT**Strings Fitted:** .012 - .053**Gig Bag/Case Included:** Fitted hard case

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

Pros: Good quality sounds from an instrument in the entry level price bracket**Cons:** Maybe tone down the amber top a bit?**Overall:** Tanglewood do it again with another instrument in their range that ticks all the boxes!

ACOUSTIC RATING

Sound Quality: ★★★★★**Build Quality:** ★★★★★**Value for Money:** ★★★★★**5 Stars:** Superb, almost faultless.**4 Stars:** Excellent, hard to beat.**3 Stars:** Good, covers all bases well.**2 or 1 Stars:** Below average, poor.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Tanglewood Guitars

www.tanglewoodguitars.co.uk

prefer – in evidence on its surface.

If you wanted me to guess, I'd say that it looks more Engelmann than Sitka, but I've been assured by the highest authorities that only a lab test would tell us for sure.

While we're here, to my eyes the amber gloss finish might be a little too orange coloured to give an authentic impression of an instrument that has been around the block a few times, it could probably do with being pulled back a tad to let nature have a go at doing the job herself.

The back and sides are African mahogany and, at this price, definitely not solid, but that shouldn't necessarily be a factor these days. The body is bound with black and white ABS and the teardrop shaped mock tortoiseshell completes the Nashville look nicely.

On to the neck now and it's a three-piece mahogany affair with a separate heel and a well crafted scarf joint that begins just below the headstock which itself is festooned with sealed back dark nickel tuners.

Flipping the TN5 back over, the front of the headstock has the Tanglewood logo running down its centre on a strip of what looks like maple. There's an ABS ivory nut at the top of the fingerboard which

looks like it has been cut nicely - certainly the action at the first fret looks just about right. Moving on, the fretboard is rosewood with small



The TN5 is a nicely built cutaway electro-acoustic with a decent pickup and a very nice voice that will doubtless improve over the years – all for £349, including a hard case.

pearloid position markers in all the appropriate places and a casual fondle of both edges of the fretboard revealed no rough fret ends.

A rosewood bridge marks the end of the string length with an ABS ivory compensated saddle in its midst and six white string pins just behind.

So everything about the TN5 looks fit for purpose, despite my reservations about the colour of the top, and so the next job is to put it through its paces and hear what it has to say for itself.

SOUND QUALITY

The TN5's neck profile is a shallow but widish D which ought to sit well with both fingerstylists and bold strummers alike. A few exploratory chords revealed quite a lot of volume and a sprightly array of bass and treble, the latter sounding particularly young and perhaps a little glassy at the same time. This is a common enough thing with factory fresh spruce tops and I would expect that maturity and use will calm things down quite a lot. Virtually every luthier I've ever spoken to says that time is one of the most important factors where tone is concerned, but the guitar needs to be played a lot, too. Both processes work together to loosen up and season the tonewood to help it give off its best a little further down the line. So it's unwise to either praise or damn an instrument overmuch based on its youthful voice.

The TN5 comes equipped with Tanglewood's TEQ-3BT onboard electronics. The preamp comprises a tuner with a thumbwheel for volume and push rotaries for treble, mids and bass and the jack socket and battery holder stowed away on the edge of the guitar's lower bout. When engaged, the tuner mutes the guitar's output which means that tuning can be carried out in

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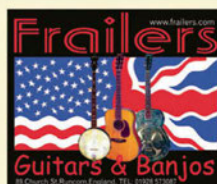
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front of an audience without any fuss at all. The screen is bright green and would be easily readable in any low light situation. The rotaries are neatly tucked away flush with the guitar's body until you need them when a simple push makes each pop up in turn. Great news for choosing your tone settings and forgetting about them.

Once amplified, the TN5 lights up the room. Even with the preamp controls set flat, the guitar sounded very able indeed. A little tweaking soon brought about a sound that I would be happy to use live – a tiny boost to the bass and a smidge more midrange and I was happy. Thus finely tuned I went from fingerstyle to plectrum work with no need to adjust things which is just what you need when you're on stage and focussing on playing.

CONCLUSION

It's always difficult to apply the correct and fair criteria when sitting in judgement of an acoustic guitar. For instance, it would be grossly unfair to have a £7k instrument sitting alongside one that costs appreciably less and base your opinions on how they both fare in a tonal shoot-out. But look at the situation here; the TN5 is a nicely built cutaway electro-acoustic with a decent pickup and a very nice voice that will doubtless improve over the years –

all for £349, including a hard case. Considering that,

Tanglewood is due a hearty pat on the back for bringing yet another instrument to the marketplace that offers considerable quality at an amazing price.

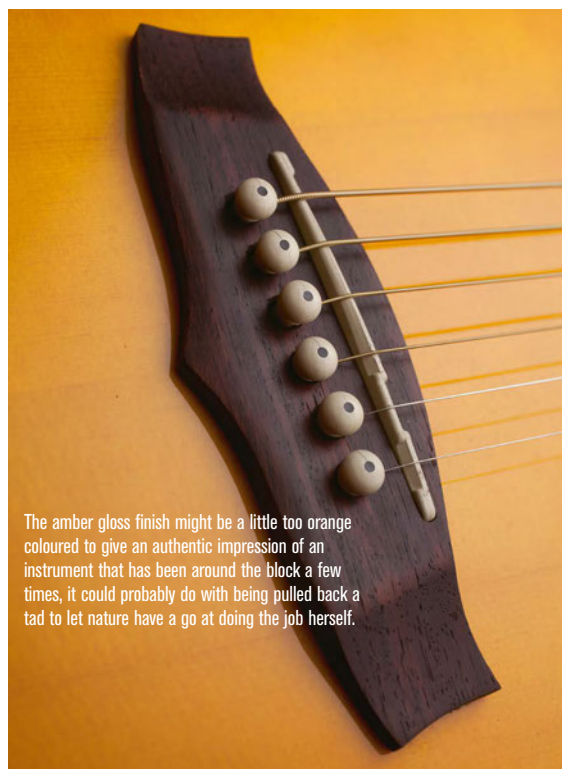
David Mead



The back and sides are African mahogany and, at this price, definitely not solid. The body is bound with black and white ABS and the teardrop shaped mock tortoiseshell completes the Nashville look nicely.



The TN5 comes equipped with Tanglewood's TEQ-3BT onboard electronics. The preamp comprises a tuner with a thumbwheel for volume and push rotaries for treble, mids and bass and the jack socket and battery holder stowed away on the edge of the guitar's lower bout.



The amber gloss finish might be a little too orange coloured to give an authentic impression of an instrument that has been around the block a few times, it could probably do with being pulled back a tad to let nature have a go at doing the job herself.

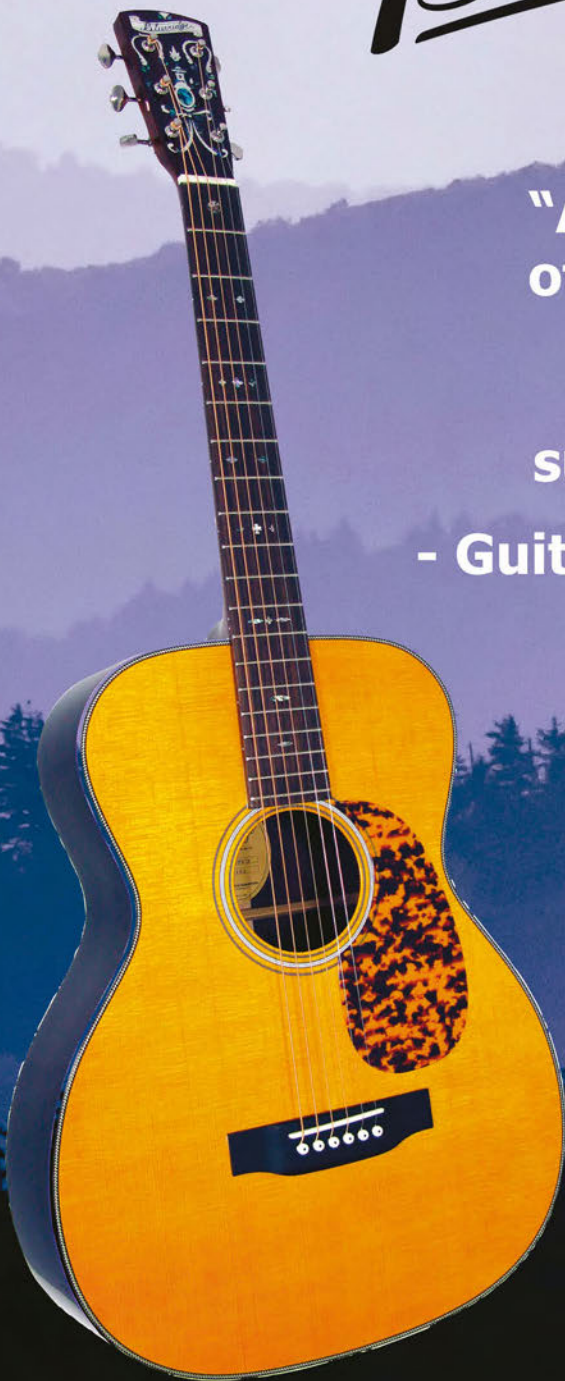
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The quality is excellent, and there is no doubting that at the £200 price point, these represent excellent value in terms both of materials and construction.



The soprano is a simply designed instrument; nicely figured mahogany on both top and back, cream binding, 17-fret neck, a Martin inspired crown headstock, and uniquely in this range, friction tuners.

Sigma has launched a range of Martin lookalike ukuleles, but does their history with the Nazareth icon have any meaning here? **Sam Wise** finds out.

In addition to the ongoing Martin inspired guitars, Sigma has now launched a range of all-solid mahogany ukuleles, in soprano, concert and tenor sizes and it's those that we look at here. There is no mistaking the heritage of these instruments; everything about them is supposed to make you think Martin, see Martin, and expect Martin – but can they possibly live up to that billing?

BUILD QUALITY

The soprano is a simply designed instrument; nicely figured mahogany on both top and back, cream binding, 17-fret neck, a Martin inspired crown headstock, and uniquely in this range, friction tuners. These, which some players believe are necessary on a soprano, where the short scale length leaves space at a premium around the nut, required some adjustment before they would hold tune without slipping, but are reasonable in use once sorted. It's a nicely put together instrument for the price point; the nut and saddle are bone, not plastic, the assembly is excellent, and frankly, it looks nice, in a traditional sort of way. We were particularly impressed with the appearance of the wood on this instrument, and, like its sisters, it even comes with a free gig bag.

The concert, every bit as much of a Martin crib as its smaller sibling, is nevertheless distinguished from it in a couple of ways. The body shape isn't just a blown up version of the soprano as most ukulele brands are; it's notably longer, which somehow lends an even rounder aspect to the shoulders. The fretboard end mirrors the elaborate spearpoint of the soprano, but the friction tuners are replaced by geared tuners. The top wood once again shows some flaming and silking, but is notably plainer than that of the soprano, while the back is much plainer. Visually, this was perhaps our favourite of the three, despite how much more attractive the wood is on the soprano.

The tenor, while still entirely Martin inspired, is much less distinguished from other uke brands. The shape could be

anyone's, and is more modern, more O-style guitar inspired, where the smaller instruments have a very traditional look. This aside, it's once again very similar, with only the broader bridge plate and 20-fret neck with a plain straight fretboard end distinguishing it from the concert model, detail-wise. The wood here is notably much plainer, and the top is two-piece rather than the one-piece tops of both the smaller ukes. The quality is, once again, excellent, and there is no doubting that at the £200 price point, these represent excellent value in terms both of materials and construction. Instruments aren't bought for their spec though, or at least shouldn't be, so let's play them.

SOUNDS AND PLAYABILITY

The soprano has a lot to live up to; it's modelled on the Martin Style 2, for which you would have to part with over £1,000. And of course, it's not the modern Martin that it really has to live up to, but the vintage unit from the first golden age of the ukulele – an instrument which, for traditional soprano strummers, comes with wings, a halo, and a terrifying price tag. Those who have purchased cut-price Stratocaster lookalikes from a shopping catalogue in their youth will know that imitation is not always a ticket to delight, but actually, the little Sigma does an impressive job of living up to its more illustrious forebears. A mahogany soprano in the grand tradition should be one thing above all else, and that's punchy; when the Martin on which this was based was made, amplification wasn't really a thing, so a uke needed to be able to make its presence felt if it was to be audible even solo, never mind in any ensemble setting. Mahogany guitar tops tend towards a warm, dark chocolatey tone that emphasises the mids and low notes, but of course, on

SIGMA SUM-2S, SUM-2C & SUM-2T UKULELES



SIGMA SOPRANO 2S

NEED TO KNOW

Manufacturer: Sigma
Model: Soprano SUM-2S
Retail Price: £199
Body Size: Soprano
Made In: China
Top: Solid mahogany
Back and Sides: Solid mahogany
Neck: Mahogany
Fingerboard: Rosewood
Frets: 17
Tuners: Friction tuners
Nut width: 36mm
Scale Length: 346mm
Gig Bag/Case Included: Gig bag

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

Pros: Wonderful topwood, pretty period styling details, punchy tone
Cons: Strident tone could be limiting for some players
Overall: Traditional, first ukulele boom goodness

ACOUSTIC RATING

Sound Quality: ★★★★★

Build Quality: ★★★★★

Value for Money: ★★★★★

5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless.

4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat.

3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.

2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

a soprano, especially one tuned to D rather than C, (which we found the Sigma preferred, and would have been the tuning you'd most often find a soprano in back in the 30s) there are no low notes, and precious little you could even call mid. The result is that the wood takes the potentially shrieky edge off the sound coming from that tiny top, and leaves you with something loud but still palatable, which we'd describe as "punchy".

We didn't have a 30s Style 2 on hand to compare to (boo), but the Sigma certainly pushes out that "listen to me" soprano tone in a convincing way. It's noticeably brighter and more in your face than the other two, although the higher tuning undoubtedly contributes to that. The soprano doesn't give a lot if you want to play subtle fingerstyle; it's competent, but where it comes to life is doing what its predecessor would have done: banging through strummed chords. It's not going to turn you into Roy Smeck overnight, but if you want to wear a three-piece suit and fedora and rehearse your split stroke, the little Sigma will make you feel right about those decisions – and look right with the fancy outfit, too.

The concert is a surprisingly different beast, for all its similar looks, but it's not without its differentiations. Sopranos, concerts and tenors aren't quite analogous to the violin, viola and cello of a string quartet because these days, they are all tuned to GCEA (although here we tuned the soprano to a more traditional ADF#B), and differ only in scale length and, generally, body size (though some hybrids such as long necked sopranos with a soprano size body but a concert scale neck exist). The Sigma concert has a considerably more muted tone than its strident little sister, but that's not a bad thing; muted might sound negative, but we only mean to imply that it's not a free breathing picker's dream (look to the tenor to fill that role).

In fact, tonally it lends itself more to the same sort of work as the soprano, chomping chords and keeping the beat, but it seems to deliver with a more subtle aplomb, rather than the in your face brightness of the soprano. The

SIGMA CONCERT 2S

NEED TO KNOW

Manufacturer: Sigma
Model: Concert SUM-2C
Retail Price: £199
Body Size: Concert
Made In: China
Top: Solid mahogany
Back and Sides: Solid mahogany
Neck: Mahogany
Fingerboard: Rosewood
Frets: 17
Tuners: Nickel w/black buttons
Nut width: 36mm
Scale Length: 381mm
Gig Bag/Case Included: Gig bag

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

Pros: Lovely wood, sweet but still punchy tone
Cons: Not enough sustain for a really satisfying picking experience
Overall: Fabulous value for money, and a lovely playing experience

ACOUSTIC RATING

Sound Quality: ★★★★★

Build Quality: ★★★★★

Value for Money: ★★★★★

5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless.

4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat.

3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.

2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.



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SIGMA TENOR 2T

NEED TO KNOW

Manufacturer: Sigma

Model: Tenor SUM-2T

Retail Price: £209

Body Size: Tenor

Made In: China

Top: Solid mahogany

Back and Sides: Solid mahogany

Neck: Mahogany

Fingerboard: Rosewood

Frets: 20

Tuners: Nickel w/black buttons

Nut width: 36mm

Scale Length: 432mm

Gig Bag/Case Included: Gig bag

ACOUSTIC TEST RESULTS

Pros: Free breathing, sustain laden tone

Cons: A little anonymous visually

Overall: The real deal for fingerstyle players

ACOUSTIC RATING

Sound Quality: ★★★★★

Build Quality: ★★★★★

Value for Money: ★★★★★

5 Stars: Superb, almost faultless.

4 Stars: Excellent, hard to beat.

3 Stars: Good, covers all bases well.

2 or 1 Stars: Below average, poor.

CONTACT DETAILS:

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www.westsidedistribution.com

www.sigma-guitars.com

tone is actually rather sweet when played gently; it simply lacks the sustain or sense of space you might want for gently cascading arpeggios. Despite falling between two stools tonally, the concert really won our heart; there's something very willing and welcoming about it. If you want it to push hard, it's up for the challenge – but if you settle back, lighten up, and play something a bit gentler (Santo and Johnny's 'Sleepwalk' in our case), it sweetens up, mellows back, and stays with you.

The tenor has a markedly different tone, and this is probably at least partly because, as well as that larger soundboard, it has 14 frets to the body, compared to the 12 of the other two. The tone here feels that bit less dense, more nuanced, and there is notably more sustain. This combines nicely with both the longer scale, and the easier top fret access provided by the 14th fret join to greatly encourage more complex playing. It's a bit of a cliché in the uke world that tenors are best for fingerstyle, and this instrument does nothing to dispel that somewhat over-simplistic worldview. Don't be fooled by the 20-fret neck though; there's very little gold to be had up that high on any fretted instrument, and these ukes are no different. Sigma may just as well have left a couple off and made another spearpoint fingerboard end, which would have given the tenor some much needed visual hooks where otherwise, far more than the other two, it's a bit "everyman".

CONCLUSION

These are not vintage Martin ukuleles, but they are lovely little ukes, and great value for money at the £200 price point. All three are good players, well made, and very well appointed. Indeed, seeing all-solid ukes delivering well at a price that normally only gets you a solid top may well rattle the competition. Each has its strengths; the soprano is an out and out, in your face strummer, and the very traditional looks and lovely wood grain make it an appealing prospect, despite the slight annoyance of the friction pegs. The concert, still more of a dancer than a singer, has a lovely sweetness to it, the single-piece top is still nicely figured, and we found the overall looks to be our favourite. The tenor, a bit of a plain Jane in both design detail and wood compared to its siblings is nevertheless the one which shines brightest when sweetly picked; at this price, perhaps you could make an argument for owning all three. Nevertheless, if we were keeping one, it would be the concert. It's cute without being stereotyped, and it stands out in a way that we rarely find concerts do. If you're ready to move from budget models on to your first really decent instrument, you should give these Sigma ukuleles a try.

Sam Wise



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CHRIS GRAY STYLE... (INDIE FOLK)

People I meet, new and old situations, daydreams and the Isle of Man – where I live – inspire me. I write 95 per cent of my songs on my acoustic. I'll be messing around on the guitar, something will stick and I'll take it from there. I'm a fan of Ray LaMontagne, Bob Dylan and Cat Stevens. People say they can hear some of these artists in my songs and it's nice to be compared to your influences. 'She Loves The Morning' [featured on April's *Acoustic Presents...* CD] is about a couple's relationship, that old story of opposites attracting. I wrote it after watching John Power play live, and his style has also influenced my writing. The song is from my debut album, *Diamonds In Your Tree*. The title track is my favourite as I love its feel and tempo. It started out as a demo and Tony Lowe's production has brought it to life. There's a nice sentiment on this one, too. I play a tobacco sunburst Guild GAD-50 ATB. I instantly liked its look, and when I played it I decided it was a keeper. It has a lovely feel and sounds perfect for my music. I use Elixir strings, DI through a PA, and use a pick when gigging. I play fingerstyle at home where nobody can hear it, but I'm getting better at it. Drop D is an effective tuning I like to use. I had some lessons from the age of 13 with a great teacher who taught me the music that I listened to rather than what he thought I should be learning. It's important to enjoy what you're doing. I'm currently writing as much as possible. The songwriting process can change over time so it's exciting to see what I come up with next. I'm playing at ButeFest in Scotland (July 17-19), some support slots around the UK, lots of gigs around the Isle of Man, and I'm working towards a tour in 2016.

www.chrisgraymusic.com



ADAM HOLMES STYLE... (CONTEMPORARY FOLK)

Rura is a five-piece Glasgow/Edinburgh based band. We formed in 2010 and comprise Jack Smedley (fiddle), Steven Blake (pipes/whistle), David Foley (bodhran/flute), Adam Brown (guitar) and myself (guitar/vocals). We try to take our traditional sound and push the boundaries a bit, playing a mix of contemporary instrumentals and songs. All of my songs are in a modern setting and focus on aspects of my life. Our second album *Despite The Dark* is just out and we're really pleased with it. Musically, it feels more cohesive than the last. We tried to write an album that made sense from start to finish and took the listeners on a journey. 'Between The Pines' is a description of a visual idea that I'd been having rather than any message or story. 'Weary Days' – about the relationship I'm in – is my favourite track. It was quite a challenging song to bring together but it's great to play live. I play a Blueridge BR73 acoustic, although for live work I use an Ibanez Artcore electric. On gigs it feels fuller than the acoustic. I wouldn't say any specific instrument helps me to write songs. I've been writing a lot recently just on my electric unplugged. I'm self-taught on guitar and don't really consider myself a guitarist. It's just a platform to support my songs. One of my inspirations is a desire to make people feel less lonely. Influences? For acoustic guitar, John Martyn and Davey Graham. Lyrically it's Robert Burns and Townes Van Zandt. Future plans? We're in the very early stages of organising some collaborative projects between ourselves and some other musicians we've met and worked with over the years, but for now it's all top secret. I'm also in the process of writing my second solo album. Coming up we have got the amazing Cambridge Folk Festival and we're out to Denmark for Tønder Festival. There's loads of other dates in among all that too, so it's really going to be a great summer.

www.rura.co.uk



CATHY MASON STYLE... (TRADITIONAL FOLK)

I'm guitarist, cellist and vocalist with the Foxglove Trio. I met lead vocalist and bodhran player Ffion Mair at college. She met melodeon player and vocalist Patrick Dean at Durham university. A few years later, we all found ourselves in London and began to play together. We're called the Foxglove Trio because Ffion is Welsh for foxglove and we were practising at a house on Foxglove Way. We're all classically trained musicians, which helps when communicating musical ideas and composing together. Patrick is excited by making music that is rhythmically interesting, I enjoy creating new melodies and harmonies, and Ffion is interested in lyrics, so it's a good combination. The songs on our debut album *These Gathered Branches* come from various sources. Sometimes they're lyrics from old books. 'The Three Huntsmen' was in a book that belonged to Patrick's granny, while others – such as 'Selar Hill' – came from an internet search. It was great to have the opportunity to develop our material in the studio. On 'Selar Hill' – which is special to me because it's about a place near my home city of Swansea – we doubled up on some of our instruments. It's got two guitars, three cellos, three voices, a melodeon and percussion and I think it's really effective. I play a Stonebridge GS-20 CM cutaway acoustic guitar. It has a gorgeous cedar front and mahogany sides and a sweet light tone. I love the sparkly tone when fingerpicking and it also sounds great when strummed. Mostly I play acoustic, but for PAs I use a Fishman pickup. Growing up, I listened to and played classical music on classical instruments and it was only when I started listening to folk artists like Kate Rusby and Cherish The Ladies in my teens that I picked up my mum's guitar and started to play. We've got lots of gigs coming up to promote the album, including summer festivals. We're also starting work on some new material.

www.thefoxglovetrio.co.uk



GEORGIA GERMEIN STYLE... (INDIE POP)

Based in Adelaide, South Australia, the Germein Sisters are an indie pop sister band. Our songs are positive, catchy, and inspired by our personal experiences. We play our own instruments and sing in harmonies, and have been performing together since we were little, and officially since 2012. There's me on lead vocals, guitars and piano, Ella (electric cello, bass guitar and backing vocals), and Clara (drums, guitar and backing vocals). My regular guitar is a beautiful full-size Voyage-Air premier series acoustic. It's an orchestra model with a cutaway, mahogany neck, rosewood back, sides and fingerboard, and a pickup. It folds in half, so it's perfect to carry on flights. It's got a warm tone to it, cuts through nicely, and fits our style of music perfectly. It's also got fairy lights on it, which is a little Germein Sisters touch on most of our instruments. I do play fingerstyle, but mostly I use a pick because I play a lot of rhythm. I usually just go straight into a regular DI. My acoustic is great for writing when I'm on the road because I almost always carry it with me. I usually start with the lyrics as I like to spend a lot of time on the words in our songs. Once I've got a bit of a structure happening with the songs, it's pretty easy to put the words to music. My favourite track on our current EP *Because You Breathe* is 'Da Da Doo', a happy summer tune about forgetting your troubles. It's simple, catchy, and a lot of fun to play on stage. There's also 'First Plane Home', a reflective pop song about making decisions. Recently we've been touring the UK and Europe. When we get home to Australia in July I'm looking forward to starting to record our new album, which we're hoping to have out next year. Then we're hoping to head to the US, and back to Europe later this year.

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Jonny Kinkead of Kinkade Guitars ranks among the most prestigious guitar makers in the UK, building a small amount of flat top guitars from his Bristol workshop.

Images: Jon Kent

‘By the time I was 16 I had built an acoustic bass for myself, although I started fiddling with guitars when I was 11. This would have been around 1970, I suppose. It wasn’t until I had left college and wondered what to do with my life, however, that I started building six-string guitars out of real timber – the acoustic bass was made out of plywood. I was living in rural Dorset around 1976 when I started luthiery, having discovered that there were suppliers in this country that sold wood that was suitable for guitar building.’

‘I was a student architect, largely getting an education in design, I suppose, more than anything else. An architect’s training goes on for bloody years, but we’d had enough of each other after about three. At the time I wasn’t sure if I wanted to be an artist or a builder of something or other, but I focused on luthiery

for a while. The guitars I built were initially for myself but people were very nice about them, telling me they sounded great. I was surprised when people told me that they sounded like American guitars. I investigated further while continuing to make guitars and showing them to people. As I continued to show more people, I got a lot of feedback from some good players. One I remember was Isaac Guillory; he invited me round to show him my guitars and thought they were fabulous. He asked how much they were – not that he ever bought one! He was, however, very complimentary and said that I should keep doing it. These experiences fuelled my desire to give it a go as a job, especially since I thought it would be more reliable than being a painter.’

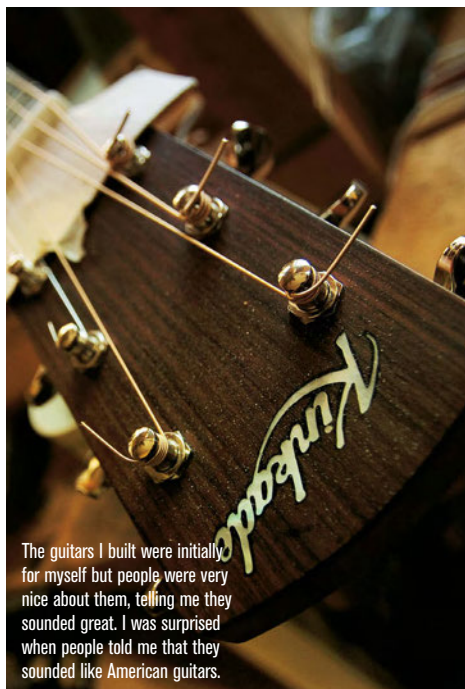
‘The models were based on American shapes, I suppose, but in those days I didn’t have access to all the American guitars.

It was more a case of having a picture of a Gibson J200, for example, and then designing a guitar that looked something like that. Likewise with the OM shape. I never drew around guitars, though, despite liking certain aspects; I wanted to individualise them. I’m a firm believer that these traditional shapes have evolved over time because they actually work. All I’ve ever done with my guitars is take the American shapes and tweak them a bit.’

‘I was around guitars as a teenager and so I knew what was inside them simply by putting my hand inside. I adjusted the guitars that my friends and I had, shaved the necks down, repainted them, made them play properly; I knew how to make a guitar work a bit better as a 14 or 15 year old. The next thing was to build on from scratch. I think there was a little booklet that I came across called Make Your Own Folk Guitar

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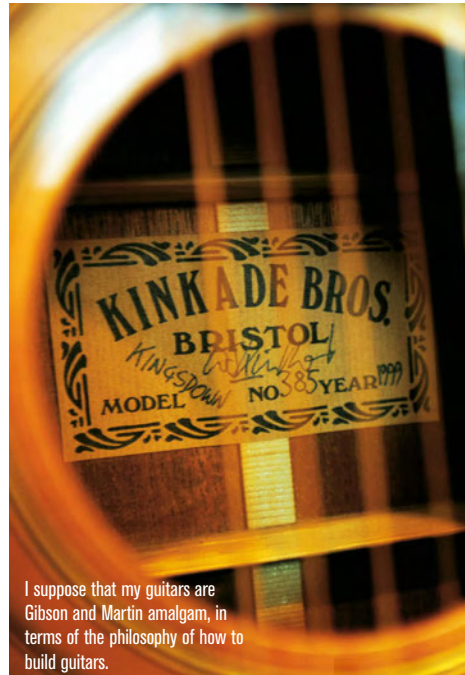
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I suppose that my guitars are Gibson and Martin amalgam, in terms of the philosophy of how to build guitars.

or something like that – it was a black and white, hand illustrated pamphlet that showed me that there was an X-brace inside the instrument. Apart from that, it was a case of making it up as I went along and learning experientially – making one far too light and one far too heavy and observing what that did to the tone and sound, then making another with adjustments. As soon as I had a workshop where the public could come in, which was probably around 1979, people would bring in American guitars that I could examine much more carefully and use that information. I suppose that my guitars are Gibson and Martin amalgam, in terms of the philosophy of how to build guitars.'

'I've established my own range of instruments now. If you look at the website, there are photographs of maybe four or five shapes – they are the standard shapes and what gives a guitar its name. The Kingsdown model, for example, retains the body dimensions and scale length of a Martin OM but with options of mahogany or rosewood back and sides. You can have it decorated, more or less, as you want. That's the case for all the models – but people can and will order totally custom guitars as well. I made one last year for (Portishead guitarist) Adrian Utleigh that was based on a European parlour guitar idea that he had; he said he wanted a nylon string guitar and he showed me something he

liked and asked if I could make him something like it. I came up with a shape that was based around these old instruments and that looked European in its headstock and bridge shapes. People will come in and ask for originals in the truest sense and I'm happy because it's interesting work. I did another for a Celtic player a couple of years ago who wanted a couple of extra frets at the bottom. He told me that he liked playing in DADGAD but he wanted to slide the capo down two frets so the open tuning would be CGCFG, and when you then proceeded to put the capo on the second fret, you were back at DADGAD. I redesigned the guitar for him and made it work.'

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Truro - UK



After the 12-string achieved major recognition in the 1930s when brought to the fore by legends such as Lead Belly (even though he got his hands on one as early as 1912), it slipped back into relative obscurity again and the major guitar companies treated it as a novelty instrument rather than a serious one. Gibson didn't start producing acoustic 12-strings until the early 1960s. In fact, Eric Darling of the Rooftop Singers who had a hit with a reworking of Gus Cannon's old song 'Walk Right In' is on record as saying, in 1963, "You couldn't buy a 12-string guitar... I ordered one from the Gibson Company, but in order to record with two 12-strings, we had to wait for the company to build a second one for Bill!" He was, of course, referring to fellow group member Bill Swanoe. They used two Gibson B-45-12 guitars to create the iconic riffs and backing that reinvigorated interest in the 12-string and from that time onwards, the major guitar companies saw the instrument in a different light and started producing both acoustic and electric models.

Other exponents who added to the 12-string's reputation were Dick Rosmini and Fred Gerlach – and then the legendary Pete Seeger added his stamp by using one. In the 1970s, a young American guitarist by the name of Leo Kottke boosted the 12-string's image worldwide with some amazing tunes and a slightly different approach. By then, the instrument was being widely featured within many genres either as a solo accompaniment by singer-songwriters or in the groups of the day such as the Beatles, Byrds, and David Bowie – the latter strummed his way through massive hits such as 'Space Oddity' with his 12-string.

Many people shy away from 12-string guitars, especially in the fingerstyle realm, because they approach it like they would a six-string. In order to get the best from a 12-string in picking mode, you have to develop a different style of right hand technique. You firstly have to master getting

EXERCISE 1

♩ = 110 PAUL BRETT

EXERCISE 2 - DOWNLOAD THE FULL TAB FROM OUR WEBSITE

♩ = 110 PAUL BRETT



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the pairs of strings sounding as one, which does take some skill, and then apply this to developing the technique. Most of the art lies in the right hand – if you get the right hand technique nailed, your left hand technique will take care of itself.

In this month's piece, I have included three exercises that will help you improve your fingerstyle technique using open minor tuning. Getting these techniques right will enable you to feel more confident using a 12-string.

Paul Brett



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THE PORTRAIT OF A MUSICAL GENIUS

*Following the premiere of Brian Wilson's biopic **Love & Mercy**, we look at the life of an enduring music icon through the eyes of John Anderson – a video producer and director who has worked with Wilson for nearly 20 years – humanising a larger than life and often misunderstood artist, while offering an insight as to why his music touches so many people.*

Words: Alison Richter





The enduring popularity of the Beach Boys' music makes it difficult to believe, and easy to forget, that some of their most successful songs were recorded in the early 1960s. At the core of the band's timeless catalogue is Brian Wilson, whose legacy as a songwriter and musician is possibly rivaled only by the myths and misconceptions that have surrounded a career spanning more than half a century. His story is told in the new, critically acclaimed biopic *Love & Mercy* which closes with Wilson performing the title song.

That performance was shot by Emmy Award winner John Anderson, producer and director of the Brian Wilson *SMiLE Live* performance DVD, which earned Anderson a 2006 Grammy nomination. It marked his sixth project with Wilson, a working relationship that began with *Imagination*, followed by *Brian Wilson On Tour*, *Pet Sounds Live In London*, and *Doin' It Again*, a 2012 film about the Beach Boys' reunion.

Anderson, also a musician, is a lifelong Beach Boys fan who spent part of his childhood in California, where he developed his passion for music and film. He remembers the impact that

Wilson and the Beach Boys had on him, as well as on youngsters and adolescents all over the world, including those who had never seen beaches and surfboards, or experienced the scenarios described in classics such as 'Surfer Girl', 'I Get Around', 'Don't Worry Baby', 'Fun, Fun, Fun', 'Help Me Rhonda', and 'California Girls'.

'I was in California for about six years, right when the Beach Boys were happening,' says Anderson. 'They were our private band in California. It was tough to move to Philadelphia in sixth grade, let me tell you! I discovered their music through my sisters, who were quite a bit older than me, so they were bringing home Elvis records and playing the radio all the time. When I listened to the Beach Boys, when I listened to Brian's lyrics, I felt like he was talking to me personally. We all did. I thought he was explaining my life and putting it into beautiful words and melodies. It hits a very deep spot in you. Not only are other people experiencing what I'm experiencing, but they're able to express it in beautiful ways. Wouldn't that be nice to do? So then you want to write songs. It takes over you, and I got completely swept up.

The music of the mid- to late 1960s — there was no other period like that with so much originality. It gives you belief in humanity, and a sense that you fit in and maybe you can be part of the action.'

Anderson was well established in Chicago when he got the call to work with Brian Wilson. He graduated from Northwestern University and was playing in a band called the Cleaning Ladys — who are still together — when he landed his first editing job, working his way up to director. It was the mid-1980s and music videos were all the rage. Working for teleproduction companies, Anderson had access to equipment, made a video for his band, and suddenly his group found themselves internationally renowned, alongside heavyweights like Dire Straits and Don Henley. When a local producer came up with the idea to film the Chicago Bears football team performing a rap song 'The Super Bowl Shuffle' in 1985, he opted to finish the video at the postproduction house where Anderson was working.

'He saw the videos I had done for my band



and said, "Let's do it there." That led to me editing 'The Superbowl Shuffle' which opened a lot of doors. I worked with many bands in Chicago and had done lots of videos for them. In 1998, I got a call from my friend Joe Thomas, who was in town producing the Brian Wilson comeback album *Imagination*. [Thomas also produced Wilson's latest and eleventh solo album *No Pier Pressure*.] Brian had moved here to make that record and it came time to make the videos. I had worked with Joe before, and he asked if I wanted to come out and meet Brian that afternoon. That was the beginning of a beautiful relationship.'

At that point, Wilson was "the biggest star" that Anderson had met. He laughs about putting on his best shirt and combing his hair in preparation for their first meeting, but admits, 'I was worried, as anyone would be, about how he would accept me'. His concerns were quickly put to rest when he found that Wilson is "just a regular guy."

Wilson was mixing a track from *Imagination* when Anderson arrived. 'He was alone in the studio,' he recalls. 'On this hand he had the real strings that he had just recorded that afternoon, and on the other hand he had the synth strings. He said, "Which one should I use?" and he played one and then the other. Meanwhile, I couldn't believe he was asking my opinion on something. It showed me that these aren't just stars – they're regular people with real feelings. It was heartening to see that he was a regular guy. And he liked my music. Joe Thomas had produced a record for the Cleaning Ladies and he suggested I

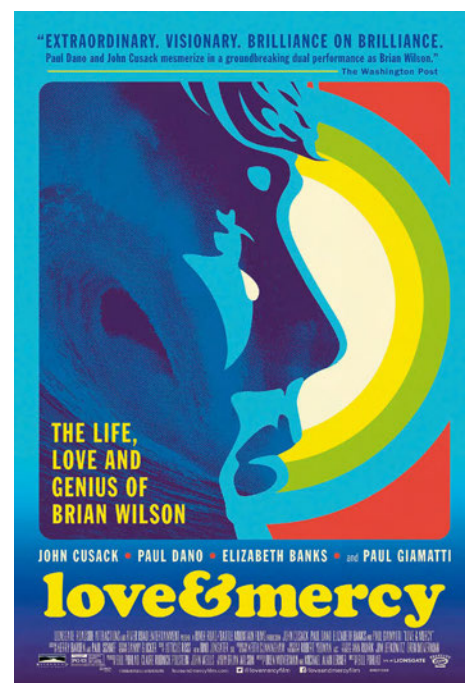
bring it. As soon as Brian got my opinion on the synths or the real strings – of course he went with the real strings, not because I thought they sounded better, but because he thought they sounded better – he put on the tape with my band's song on it, and to see that affect him ... he started doing this dance where he stands in place and moves his hips and arms a little bit, and to see him doing that to a song I'm playing – it doesn't get better than that.'

The Beach Boys signed with Capitol Records in 1962 when Wilson was only 20 years old. He wrote or co-wrote more than two dozen of their top 40 hits and was an integral part of the band's multi-textured harmonies and phenomenal success, which resulted in nine consecutive gold albums, as documented on his website. In addition to being a singer, songwriter, and musician, Wilson is also a producer – all skills that reached a new height with the Beach Boys' iconic 1966 album *Pet Sounds* which many consider one of the greatest albums of all time. It was during this time that Wilson began his journey down a long road of personal struggles. *Love & Mercy* covers two well-documented periods in Wilson's life: the 1960s and the 1980s, depicting the early success, creativity, eventual psychiatric struggles, and ultimate recovery. Anderson describes it as "a complex film that makes you think" adding, 'I'm really glad that people are going to get to see it.'

By March of 1998, when he met Wilson, 'He was in a really good place,' Anderson says. 'He'd been married to Melinda for two or three years,

and she had really gotten him the care and the attention that he needed. He was strong, he was away from whatever demons there might have been in LA, he was in a new working environment with a new producer in Joe Thomas and the whole Chicago surroundings, so it was kind of a period of rediscovery for Brian. He was into life and into making new music. He'd been away from the scene for a while and he was getting his legs back again in a way. Being with Melinda gave him confidence, being with Joe gave him confidence, so he was really ready to go. He was ready to work, and when somebody's ready to work, that means they show up on time for the interviews, they take the background vocals when I need them to go back in and light them and shoot them so they look good, they put up with all the junk that someone like me gives you. He was strong enough to do that, and that inspired me. You're with him in a way that you're not with other people, but you know all of the troubles he's had in his life and all the pain he's felt. I don't mean to oversimplify this, but when he's feeling good, you feel good. But you tend to forget that you're dealing with Brian Wilson because he is such a regular guy. He's sharing your fries and he's talking to you about some pretty girl that just walked down the street, and then it hits you that, "Hey, this is Brian Wilson, so you'd better get it together." So absolutely I try to bring my A-game to Brian because he so deserves it.'

Anderson creates many of the stage visuals for Wilson's concerts. He also produced the video content for the Beach Boys' 2012 tour and directed, edited, and co-wrote the aforementioned *Doin' It Again* – a PBS documentary about their long-awaited reunion. 'Oh my god, what a show!' he says. 'Who knew what to expect in 2012? After



JOHN ANDERSON: THE GRAMMY- NOMINATED EMMY-WINNING LONGTIME WILSON COLLABORATOR

John Anderson was 10 years old when he had epiphany. 'I saw *A Hard Day's Night* at a theater in Mill Valley, California,' he says. 'I'll never forget it. It was bigger than life. We lost our minds, all of us kids. We went up on the stage and tried to touch our favorite Beatle as they moved across the street. It was complete pandemonium. They had to shut the film down and wait for us to get back to our seats. Five minutes later, a hundred kids, at least, are up there touching the screen. And the girls — are you kidding? That's when I realized, This is the ticket!'

Today, his Chicago-based Anderson Productions is a full-service production and post-production facility. He has won numerous awards, and his client list is a who's who of musical talent, television programs, and entertainment companies.

He continues working with Brian Wilson, and in December 2014 assisted with shooting a Las Vegas concert for longtime Chicago television music program *Soundstage*. He also played a part in bringing last year's Wilson/Jeff Beck co-headline tour to Chicago's House of Blues for the annual benefit concert for San Miguel Schools.

Recent projects include *Born In Chicago*, a feature-length documentary about Chicago blues; *Joey Molland: Badfinger, Beatles, & Beyond*, a stage and screen presentation combining Molland's live performances with documentary film clips; and *Sam Lay in Bluesland*, a documentary about the legendary Chicago blues drummer that premiered in April at the Chicago International Movies and Music Festival before a sold-out crowd (www.samlayinbluesland.com). Anderson is working on a documentary about Paul Butterfield for a 2016 release. A film about Joey Molland is slated for 2017. www.thisisandersonproductions.com

all the stories, after all the bullshit headlines, all the junk that's out there, number one, who would have ever expected that they would have gotten together, and number two, who would have expected that they could make beautiful music, and man, did they! It was tremendous. Everyone had their role, everyone's still got their voice, everyone's got their personalities. Al still sings like a bird. Brian — I don't want to say that it's an easier gig for him, but when you've only got to sing lead on every third or fourth song, it's much easier to get into the vibe, play the piano, and feel the love that the world has for you.'

'You know, Brian never felt that love as a Beach Boy. He went off the road. He wasn't going out there, hearing the screams and so forth, and feeling the love. When he came back as a solo artist, here he was feeling this for the first time. It was incredibly inspiring. And now, here he is in a completely different configuration with many of the same songs that he played solo but also a whole different canon of stuff. For the first time, he was seeing all the love that people have for the Beach Boys. It can only make you stronger. It was a tour de force. I was really overcome with the whole thing. The music was still beautiful, they could still pull it off, and it was just a party. Who is America's greatest band? You can easily make the argument that it's the Beach Boys, and here they were, live in person, something you never thought you would see after all of the junk of the last 50 years, and they're pulling it off musically.'

More than 50 years since their debut, the Beach Boys are cited as influences by musicians in all genres and loved by fans of all ages. Of course, Brian Wilson is still revered as one of music's most innovative and prolific singers, songwriters, musicians, and producers — a true artist in every sense.

'There's a deep emotional connection there,' says Anderson. 'Something about the way he presents those 12 tones and those few simple lyrics shows you that it comes from someone who feels things very deeply. Nothing they put out ever sounded like anything anyone else had done, or anything else they had done, other than stylistically, other than you recognise the same voices. It represented the whole beauty of the human experience, from the 'Fun, Fun, Fun' party songs that everyone can relate to — and there's genius in those lyrics, too, don't kid yourself; Mike Love's lyrics were a key part of Brian's success back then — to songs like 'In My Room' and 'God Only Knows' that make you slow down and say, "Oh my gosh, this is a universal feeling; you can express deep joy and sorrow in a pop song." What they've done is unique; it is truly different. I think that's what continues to draw people to the Beach Boys and to Brian's music.'

Brian Wilson will tour the UK this September. For more information, visit: www.brianwilson.com

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IN THE LOOP

THIS MONTH, MATT TELLS YOU HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF LOOP REVERSE

I was playing guitar on a recording session recently, and I started using my looper pedal set up to record a loop, layer a harmony guitar part and play the loop backwards. The other musicians on the session were surprised and impressed by something I consider pretty common place. Luckily, we had a drummer that maintained a constant tempo and he kept everything in time with the loop. Playing a simple melody into a loop pedal and then hitting the loop reverse button created an unusual yet melodic sound that really added to the overall arrangement.

Reverse guitar parts remind us of the great 60s records like the Beatles' 'Tomorrow Never

Knows' and Hendrix's reversed solos on *Axis: Bold As Love*. It's a wonderfully psychedelic sound, with that swooshing and sucking effect. Some of the distinctive sounds on the original 1963 *Doctor Who* theme were created like this. It was originally achieved by reversing the tape in the recording studio, but now we can achieve this sound live simply by pushing a pedal while live looping; once we have recorded a loop, we can instantly play it backwards. Loop pedals such as the Line 6 DL4, the Boomerang, the Boss RC-20XL and the Electro-Harmonix 2880 all have the facility to reverse a loop.

If you overdub onto the reversed loop normally, and you reverse the loop back to the original way, the phrase you overdubbed will be reversed. This sounds confusing, but makes more sense to actually do it. With the reverse feature on a loop pedal you can even learn the chord sequence to a song backwards – when the loop plays reversed, the chords to the song are in the right order but the sounds have that unique backwards quality. You can do the same with the song's melody if you take the time and have the patience to learn it backwards. This is quite challenging to do, but can be worth the investment of time. As ever, there are some interesting examples of this on YouTube – just do a search for "reverse looping".

If you have a mic attached to your looper, backwards harmony vocals sound amazing and unusual, but are quite hard to pull off. Jonny Greenwood uses the looper on a Kaoss pad when Radiohead play live to reverse Thom Yorke's lead vocal on 'Everything In It's Right Place'. In the context of a brilliant song, these quite avant garde techniques can sound really interesting and really add to an arrangement.

Try hitting the body of your guitar to create a percussion sound, looping it, and then hitting reverse – you will probably end up with a beat you never expected that may surprise and inspire you.

EXAMPLE 1

Standard tuning

♩ = 100

S-Gt

EXAMPLE 2

Standard tuning

♩ = 100

S-Gt

Contemporary psychedelic bands such as Tame Impala, Flaming Lips, and Knifeworld often use these sounds.

This month, we're going to look at how a simple repeating pedal part can sound effective in the context of a larger arrangement, especially when played backwards. **Example 1** is our initial melody played in the key of D. Hit loop record and play the melody in. It might take a bit of practice to get this perfectly in time. Once you get the feel of the rhythm, coordinating your feet on the loop pedal, and your hands on the guitar, it soon becomes second nature. Once you have recorded it in, let it play around once, then hit the reverse button on your loop pedal.

Example 2 shows the sequence as heard when you hit the loop

reverse button; every note is backwards. In addition to the actual reversal of the notes, you get the really cool sucking psychedelic backwards sound.

Once it's looping, we can play a chord sequence over the top as shown in **example 3**. The chords are Csus2 add13 (no 5th), Bm7 (no 5th), and Dsus2. Suspended chords have a lovely open unresolved sound and they often make us think of the jangly chord work of bands like the Who, Crowded House and the Smiths. You can record this sequence in or just play it over the top and build it up with rhythmic variations, perhaps alongside a vocal or other parts of a larger arrangement with some percussion. Next, reverse our initial melodic figure from **example 1** back to normal. On

most loop pedals, simply hitting the reverse button again plays the part around the original way.

Example 4 shows a harmony part you can record on top of our initial loop from **example 1**. Once this harmony part is recorded, you can hit reverse again and hear the whole thing backwards. Now you have a doubly unusual harmonised reversed loop part – something that will help your arrangements surprise the listener, but with a melody.

Once you get the hang of the reverse feature on your loop pedal, it opens up numerous opportunities for musical experimentation. If you are playing a solo with your band, you can record a short lead part into your looper and then hit reverse and allow it to play back like a Hendrix lead from the

60s. You could then play back the reversed loop and play a "call and response" with it – once forward, once backward, creating an unusual solo with just one simple idea. It's a brilliant feature to get you thinking differently about your music, especially if you are in a bit of a rut with your songwriting.

Matt Stevens



MATT STEVENS
Instrumental Composer

Matt Stevens is a musician and composer from London. An instrumental artist, he uses an acoustic guitar and sampler to create multi-layered tracks live. His music has been described as "a guitar orchestra". He plays live all over the UK and listens to Sonic Youth, Carcass, Nick Drake, Cardiacs and King Crimson. He is constantly recording new music for several projects.
www.mattstevensguitar.com

EXAMPLE 3

Standard tuning

♩ = 100

Csus2add13(no5) Bm7(no5) Dsus2

S-Gt

mf

EXAMPLE 4

Standard tuning

♩ = 100

S-Gt

mf

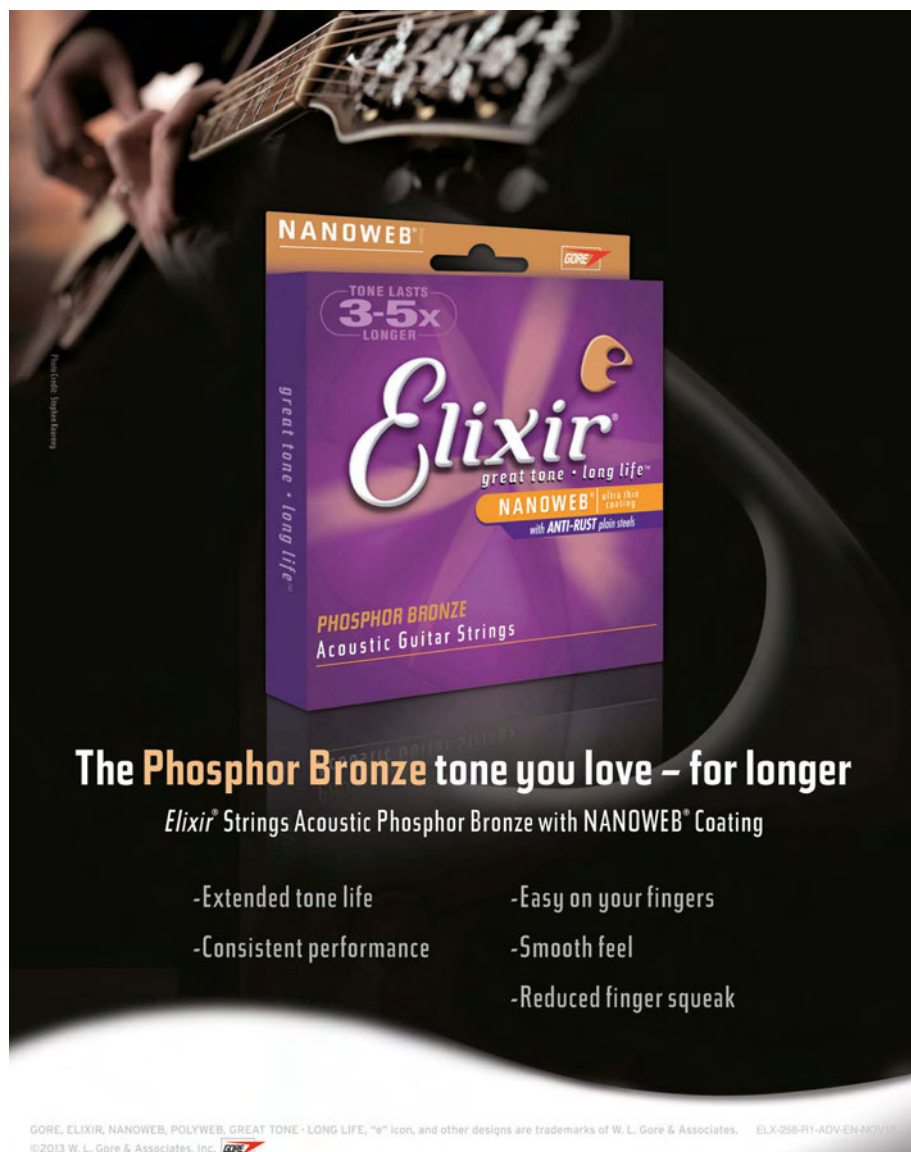
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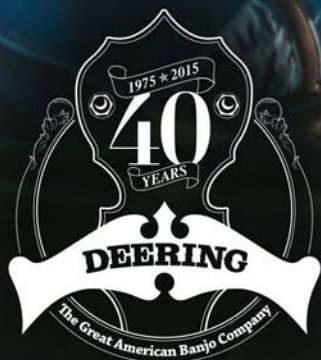
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CLIVE CARROLL

Acoustic Virtuoso

Essex boy Carroll was born into a family of musicians and 35 years on he finally got a job writing for *Acoustic* magazine. In between, he spent a lot of time waiting around in airports, filing his nails and befriending theatre sound technicians.

www.clivecarroll.co.uk

This month's article features an arrangement of a classic ragtime piano tune by George Botsford (February 24, 1874 – February 11, 1949). It was first published in 1908 and, as well as being one of Botsford's most important compositions, it also made its way onto television as the theme tune for the BBC2 snooker tournament *Pot Black*!

This version for solo guitar is in drop D tuning and it opens with

a slightly reduced version of the piano octave introduction. The triplet contains a hammer-on and it is plucked with fingers *i* and *a*. This figure is followed by a group of octaves with the thumb plucking the lower notes while the upper notes are played with alternating *m* and *i* strokes. In bar three, fretting-hand fingers one, three and four are used, after which digits one and three can shift up a fret to form the D chord with the addition of finger two.

From bar five, all stems pointing

downward are plucked with the thumb. Try playing through the bass line from bars five to 10 and you will hear an alternating feel coupled with some walking bass line ideas. Next, play through the upper melodic part using fingers only – i.e. no thumb – to get a feel for the syncopated tune. Following on, combine the two parts, ultimately ensuring that the swing is completely stable.

This technique is interrupted at bar 11 by an arpeggio run. All

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9

13

2

17

fingerings are marked in the score and the final note in bar 12 is a harmonic on string three at the fifth fret. Remember, the closer your picking hand is to the bridge when plucking this note, the crisper the sound.

We are in familiar territory once again from bar 13 and the chord sequence throughout bars 17 and 18 dictates some slightly tricky fretwork. The fourth note in bar 17 is an open first string and this will give you time to fret the

G sharp on string sixth with finger four. Once again, an open string – this time the B – at the end of the same bar allows time for you to shift your fretting hand back down for the A on string three.

The full version of 'Black and

White Rag' contains three more sections of fun albeit challenging arpeggios and scale figures. The piano score is readily available so why not have a go at arranging these for solo guitar!

[Clive Carroll](#)

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LEON HUNT

UK Banjo Expert

Leon Hunt continues to confound the stereotypes that try to confine the banjo to bluegrass, by making his living playing alongside some of the world's top musicians from a number of musical styles and disciplines. That said, he's not one to shy away from the clichés either – watch the TV for a long enough and there's every chance you'll hear some of his music. Leon has also enjoyed being part of several major theatre productions and as well as being a frequent contributor to *Acoustic*, Leon also recently completed his debut instructional package for Mel Bay, which is out now. www.leonhunt.com

To bounce, or not to bounce – that is the question. Whether 'tis cooler for the ditty to roll it with strict metronomacy or to swing and hop like a hepcat... In the interest of good taste I'll stop now and get to the point.

When I eventually got around to doing the final read-through of the tablature written for this column, I hit the play button included in the software and suffered the horrible MIDI portrayal of the arrangement du jour. While this computerised playback is perfectly adequate for verifying the transcription's accuracy, it's certainly nowhere near good enough to qualify it

as music, unless of course you're the type of person that feels Kraftwerk is too funky. Although this is certainly, at least in part due to the cheap synthesised banjo sound selected for the playback, the real issue here is without doubt the total lack of rhythmic detail, feel and bounce.

Bounce has been a hot topic among banjo players for decades and runs mostly along the lines of: does it sound better with it or without it? And even, is it

possible to control the amount of bounce you instinctively play with? At the risk of sitting on the fence, I would suggest that all banjo players employ at least a certain amount of bounce in their playing and that it's really more a question of quantity. When it comes to learning to control the amount of bounce you play with, I would argue that it's an expressive musical device like any other and your playing will surely benefit from the ability to

add or subtract bounce at will. Many people have a tendency to automatically add bounce from the outset. I'm of the opinion that music should be learnt as straight as possible, it always seems far easier to add bounce than it does to remove it.

In essence, bounce is very similar to swing, and like swing it is created by the subtle combination of slightly uneven spaces between the notes and some dynamic emphasis on

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BANJO BOUNCE

USING SPACES BETWEEN NOTES AND DYNAMIC EMPHASIS ON SPECIFIC BEATS

BANJO BOUNCE KEY OF D

A Part

D G⁷ D B⁷

6 E A⁷ D A⁷

10 D G⁷ D B⁷

14 E A⁷ D D⁷

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B Part

18 G G D D

22 E E B^b A

A Part

26 D G⁷ D B⁷

30 E A⁷ D A⁷

specific beats. When looking at quavers (8th notes) as we tend to do with this style of banjo playing, bounce can be added by moving the second note closer to the third note – and so on. The closer these notes become, the more bounce you'll be injecting into your playing. This is also occasionally referred to as jazz eighths (as opposed to straight eighths).

It's pretty easy to tie yourself in knots when attempting to analyse these subtleties of music, especially when you're focussing on the rhythmic stuff. In the long run, at least in my experience, this generally turns out to be counter productive and potentially inhibiting. It's best to try to understand these more esoteric rhythmic devices without reaching for anything like a calculator or a db meter and just spend as much time as you can listening, both critically for the specifics and in passing for general feel.

Allen Shelton (1936-2009) was the banjo player best known for having lots of bounce in his playing and for me one of the most overlooked and interesting players of all time. Bluegrass fans will be familiar with Shelton for his work with the Virginia Boys, the band run by first-generation bluegrass brother duo, Jim and Jesse McReynolds. Shelton's association with Jim and Jesse spanned several decades, although apparently there was a 10-year period where the brothers had to use various other banjo players after Shelton had walked off in protest over a project the band had going with The Nashville Symphony! It wasn't really until his first solo album that we got to hear Shelton stretch his musical legs and shows off his ingenuity and interest in styles beyond the country and bluegrass he was so well known for. In previous

columns, I've rattled on about the influence that jazz has had on bluegrass banjo, Shelton was one of the very first to push this influence discernibly further than Earl Scruggs did. His 1977 solo album, *Shelton Special*, features 14 instrumentals that are almost all, to varying extents, from the early jazz repertoire.

This month's tab is a transcription of the opening track from that very album. *Banjo Bounce* is one of Shelton's own instrumentals and although not a jazz standard per se, it does clearly show his leanings in that direction with a chord sequence that wouldn't be out of place in any jazz "fake book". The opening couple of bars are based on a chordal figure that has been used on a few banjo instrumentals over the years, including the questionably titled Eddie Adcock tune *Turkey Knob* (Adcock is the guy who became

famous a few years back for having brain surgery while playing the banjo! Google it). The figure features two fretted strings and two open strings and goes back and forth from D to G by moving just one finger. I've always enjoyed finding ways of shifting from one chord to another with the minimum of movement (a philosophy I try to apply to many areas of my life). In this instance, the D is actually more like a D6 because of the open B string and the G is more of a G9, albeit with the A note (the ninth) being tucked away in the middle of the chord as opposed to more typically being plonked on the top. Throughout the tune there are quite a few places where the top two or three strings of the banjo are played simultaneously; this is known as "pinching". Pinching is one of those techniques that can sound great if all the strings are being hit perfectly in sync with each other but dreadful if not. It's also very important to make sure you're achieving the same amount of sound from all of the strings being struck.

Finally, a technique I've often used when attempting to get students to increase the amount of bounce they're putting into a tune like this. Just use your mind's ear to imagine you're playing along with the brass section of a big swing band like Glen Miller's or Benny Goodman's. Just getting In The Mood can often be all it takes. A video of this transcription can be found in the digital edition.

Leon Hunt



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DANIEL HO

Grammy Award-winning musician

Daniel Ho is a multiple Grammy Award winner and record producer specialising in Hawaiian music. In 2010, Daniel's solo ukulele album *Polani* became the first of its kind to receive a Grammy nomination. He has numerous Hawaiian music industry accolades, has authored eight tuition books and tours the world as an acclaimed songwriter, performer and university lecturer. Daniel was born in Honolulu, but is now based in Los Angeles.

www.danielho.com

A famous songwriter was at a dinner party assembled on her behalf. Throughout the evening, the hosts streamed their similarly inspired original music in the background in hopes that one of their beloved songs might capture her attention. Drinks were served, then dinner, then dessert, and conversation flowed without pause. A wonderful time was had by all, but the music never quite attracted the fancy of the esteemed guest. Until what sounded like an electronic dance music beat began to play. She stopped mid-sentence as her ear was drawn by an entire piece performed on traditional Chinese opera percussion instruments. To boot, one could

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OBSCURING THE OBVIOUS

CREATING UNIQUE RHYTHMS ON THE UKULELE

'AUKAHI' (FLOWING HARMONY) - DANIEL HO

decipher that the banging and crashing was played organically by musicians, and not manufactured by a machine. House music typically

sports a bass drum pounding quarter notes opposite a hi-hat opening on up-beats, with a snare cracking backbeats on two and

four. This song was all of that, but a fascinating take on the obvious.

Treating the familiar with something distinctive sparks a

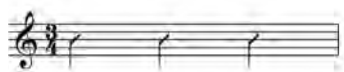
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listener's interest. Familiarity, in the form of a recognisable rhythm or a memorable melody, is an effective icebreaker, as it is the common ground shared by musician and audience. Uniqueness, is the dazzling icing and gold foil decoration on a cake made out of boxed cake mix.

Let's explore the process of creating a unique rhythm within the framework of a 3/4 time signature, which is the second most frequently used meter after 4/4, also known as common time. 3/4 time, better known as a waltz, is eminent in classics such as Strauss' Blue Danube, Rodgers & Hammerstein's Edelweiss, Sondheim's Send in the Clowns, and The Beatles' Norwegian Wood.



The rhythmic emphasis in the example above is on the downbeats of beats one, two, and three. Another way we can evenly divide the 3/4 time signature and retain a steady pulse is to play two dotted quarter notes.



The common denominator in both of these rhythms is the eighth note. 3/4 time has a total of six eighth notes. In the first example, the eighth notes are grouped into three sets of two. Hold a C chord and strum the following rhythm on your ukulele. You can either use all down strokes, or a down-up, down-up, down-up strumming pattern.



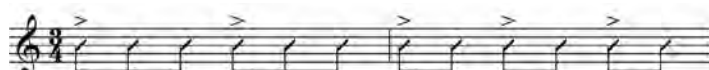
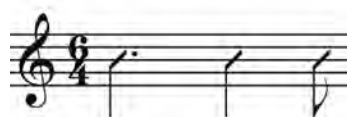
In the second example, the two dotted quarter notes are equivalent to two sets of three eighth notes. All down strokes or a triple strum would work best for this rhythm.



Alternating between these two groupings of eighth notes is called a Bulerías (think West Side Story, America). This traditional flamenco rhythm cleverly disguises the obvious three beats per measure and extends the rhythmic phrase from one measure to two.



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THIS MONTH'S TRACK



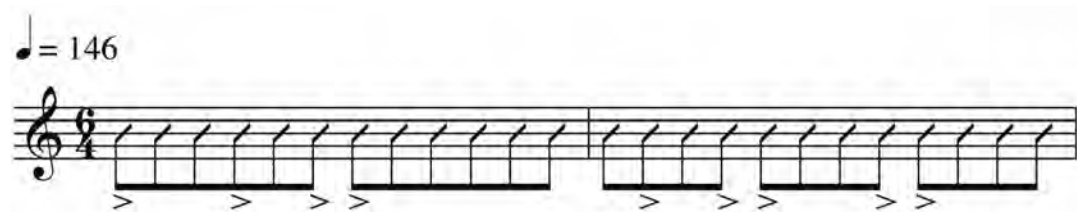
Now, let's add a little syncopation to our Bulerías by subdividing a step further to sixteenth notes. The following rhythm (below) is based on the Bulerías rhythm in example 5 (above), but notice how the accented downbeat of measure two is not played in our new rhythm. This deliberate omission further disguises the pulse of the 3/4 meter.



To make this rhythm more understandable, we'll notate it in 6/4, so the sixteenth notes become eighth notes. Writing it this way makes it a little easier to read, but it sounds exactly the same.



Next, let's designate this rhythm as accents on a continuous eighth note strumming pattern. Hold a C chord, and play the following example with a down-up, down-up strum.



Don't worry if the accents are a little tricky at first. The purpose of this exercise is to explore beyond the obvious. After a bit of practice with a metronome, it should feel comfortable and start to groove. In the piece 'Aukahi' (Flowing Harmony), this 6/4 rhythm is played by the ipu heke (a Hawaiian percussion instrument made from a gourd) and udu (a ceramic, African percussion instrument). The excerpt of the piece across the page shows how the melody notes, designated by "v" accents above and below the noteheads, refer to this modified Bulerías rhythm. This is most evident in measures seven and eight, where the accents first fall in a dotted quarter rhythm, then emphasize quarter notes in measure eight.

Take a look at the tabulate for 'Aukahi'. In my quest for harmonic intrigue, the chord in measure 14 was a eureka moment. It is an open voicing of an A minor triad over a Bb bass note. Theoretically, it is a Bbma9(+11) with no third and fifth. Extended chords are not easy to define on ukulele because only four pitches are available simultaneously. In this instance, it worked out favorably because the absence of the third and fifth contributes to the chord's nebulous quality.

So much has been done with the ukulele by wonderful musicians across genres. Creating original repertoire and discovering new ways to play it is a worthy challenge. Learning about musical traditions around the world can be an infinite source of rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic inspiration for ukulele players and composers. In fact, playing millennium-old folk songs on ukulele is hardly a departure from performing dance club music on Chinese opera percussion instruments!

'Aukahi' (Flowing Harmony) is the title track of Daniel's new CD, available on iTunes and from Daniel's website. www.danielho.com

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THOMAS LEEB

Fingerstyle Virtuoso

Austrian-born Thomas Leeb plays a style he calls "the bastard child of acoustic fingerstyle." This style owes as much to percussive techniques as traditional fingerstyle guitar as his tunes are usually punctuated by slaps, pops and beats. Adding to the overall effect is his frequent use of ringing harmonics. 'What Thomas does on an acoustic guitar probably shouldn't be legal.'

www.thomasleeb.com

Toward the end of the recordings for my new album *Trickster*, it became apparent that we needed a slow and measured tune as a counterpoint to all the high-octane tunes on the album. After coming up empty when searching my creative cupboards in all my "normal" tunings, I thought I'd try out this strange Em7sus4 tuning that everyone's always using.

EADGBE is completely alien to me besides a few half-remembered Metallica and Guns N' Roses licks, so this expedition into "new" territory was exciting.

The result is, well, nothing fancy but a lot of low-maintenance fun to play and sounds good to me. While this is notated in standard tuning, the original is played on my Lowden

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'NOTHING FANCY'

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'NOTHING FANCY' - THOMAS LEEB

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Guitar

let ring throughout

EADGBE

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*Pull off to open string with picking hand finger over harmonic node

baritone so the recording won't sound "right".

The bass line stays pretty steady throughout the whole piece. For first three lines, you'll need to spend a little time figuring out what fingers to use for bass notes versus the harmonics but there's only one easy solution and I trust you'll find it.

The harmonic on "fret 24" in bar seven is somewhere over your sound hole and is played with the right hand only since the left is still busy holding down the bass strings. How's it done? I gently touch my index finger on the harmonic node point (in this case fret 24) I then use my ring finger to pick that string.

You'll find another one of those in bar eight. You could technically play this one in a normal fashion on the seventh fret but this way sounds a bit neater.

The rest shouldn't be too challenging, the only possible exception being the over-the-bar phrase starting at bar 10 but since this is no technical matter but a mere musical one. I'll leave it to your ears and brain cells to figure it out. It neatly fits in a simple 4/4.

Thomas Leeb



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DAVID MEAD

Tuition Author

David Mead is one of the UK's foremost guitar writers, having authored several best-selling tutors. An accomplished acoustic guitarist, he has released two critically-acclaimed albums, *Nocturnal* and *Arboretum*.

www.davidmead.net

Recently I have been outlining various ways in which you can enrich your DADGAD compositions by being aware of a little bit of harmony and theory during the process. This kind of thinking should never be allowed to rule or dominate the proceedings, but it's always handy to know what should work in any given situation. If music theory can offer up a few clues in a situation where you're not quite sure what to do next, then why not at least consider a few options?

So I thought I would illustrate this by giving you a walkthrough of one of my own pieces – the initial inspiration, the problems, and solutions I experienced during its writing.

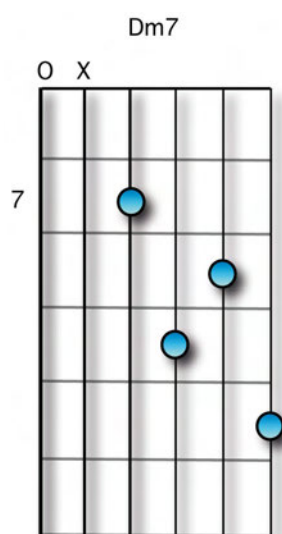
INSPIRATION

The piece is called 'Almost Lost At Sea' and was inspired by reading the memoirs of a lady called Violet Jessop. Basically, Violet was a member of the crew of Titanic

on the ship's fateful maiden voyage and was lucky enough to survive. She went on to become a nurse aboard Titanic's sister ship Britannic which also sank when it hit a mine during WWI. Once again she survived, but a truly remarkable footnote to the story was that the Titanic actually had a third sister ship, Olympic, which didn't sink, but was badly damaged in a collision at sea – and Violet was aboard then, too! I was so touched by the story and Violet's own very understated account of all three incidents that I decided to write a piece of music for her. Inspiration struck when the first two chords collided in my mind...

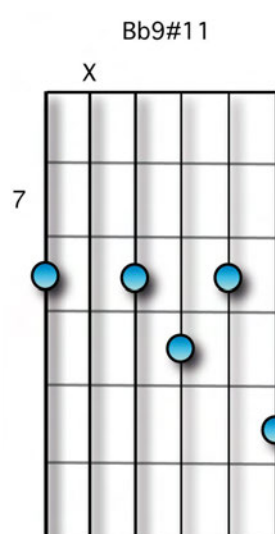
COMPOSITION

I suppose I should say that the first chord popped under my fingers first. It's a nice voicing of D minor 7 and it had, to me, a kind of haunting quality to it.



As for the second chord, I heard the note B flat in the bass with a similar arpeggio on top in my head. Unfortunately, this called for some really awkward fingering as finger one has to form a partial barre across the three bass strings while fingers two, three and four hold the notes on the top three. Frankly, it hurt when I tried it, but the only other option was to barre the whole chord with finger one, but I couldn't do it without some handling noise and string squeak and the loss of the ringing sustain I wanted. In the end, pain was the only option and I practised the chord change for ages in order to make it smooth. Try it for yourself, but please take care; I don't want to send anyone to A&E!

From then on, the rest of the tune came very quickly. I knew that I wanted to continue the arpeggiated chords and make them sound like the motion of sea as much as possible. So the music



goes through some changes – F to B natural to B flat and down to D before pausing on the high A at the end of this section.

All of the arpeggios call for a bit of a stretch for the fourth finger or, in the case of one with the D in the bass, the first finger has to reach backwards to stop the E on fret two.

This sort of awkwardness happens a lot when you can hear what you want to happen inside your head and then task the fingers to try and play it; often you find that notes are out of reach and all sorts of special measures have to be brought into play. In extreme cases you have the choice of retuning the guitar – dropping a string in pitch will sometimes make things much easier across the board.

So there you have it. What is printed here is roughly half the tune, the rest called upon me to write a part for a string section to bring in during the middle part, but that's another story!

As usual, take things slowly – I'd recommend one arpeggio at a time just to get the fingers acquainted with the gymnastics required. It's a relatively slow tune, but it needs to be played with a vast oceanic seascape at the back of your mind.

If you're keen to hear how the piece sounds, it's available on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=eIrnBFu8JFM. Beware that I dropped the whole guitar by a semitone to what I call "FlatGAD" for the recording just to give it a little bit more of a majestic feel.

David Mead

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'ALMOST LOST AT SEA' - DAVID MEAD

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Guitar

Guitar

Gtr.

Gtr.

Gtr.

Gtr.

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Touring instrumental guitarist, recording as 'Chris Woods Groove', described as 'changing the perceived boundaries of the acoustic guitar'. Author of the acclaimed book and DVD package *Percussive Acoustic Guitar* from Hall Leonard.

www.chriswoodsgroove.co.uk

This month's column is about harmonic lead playing – or playing accompanying notes to your melody lines. Harmony can bring lead playing to life and it is especially effective on the acoustic, and in this column I'm going to show you how...

The examples are set out in a simple order; firstly, several harmonic shapes to use in your playing, and secondly, the scale

patterns I have used to find them. The following paragraph explains some of the mechanics behind this and it is useful to know. However, if music theory will put you off playing then all you really need to grasp is: "You can play really cool lead lines by playing two notes at the same time, from the same scale" – got it? Okay, let's take a look.

Here's the more in-depth stuff... When we play a chord, we play three notes or more together that create a harmony, or the sound of several notes working together. All of the notes used in these chords can be found in the relevant scale; this means that any note in that same scale when played simultaneously with another note from that scale will create a pleasurable and harmonious sound (a harmony). Particular intervals (gaps between notes) will produce a specific atmosphere or emotion. Ultimately, this means that when playing a solo or melodic line

you can "beef" up your sound by simply doubling that melody note with another note from the scale, just like a chord. The result is harmonic lead playing.

In **example one**, you can see a variety of two note shapes. These are shapes taken from the scales tabbed out in **example two**; I like to call these shapes "harmonic pathways" as they are found within the scale patterns themselves, bridging gaps and taking us on a bit of a journey. Notice how the shapes or "harmonic pathways" have a scale-like progression to them as they progress up the fretboard; because these shapes have been taken from the E minor (G major) scales in **example two**; if you look at the tab, you should be able to see how they bridge the gap between these scale patterns perfectly creating those "harmonic pathways". Take some time to enjoy these and then find your own. Check out the video

in the digital edition to hear an example of how to use them.

The final two examples are based around D major (B minor). Firstly, we have the shapes or "harmonic pathways" and, secondly, we have the scales. So there is plenty for you to get started with. Make sure you are using your ear; evaluate what you hear, try and find the same harmonies in different places and perhaps even try to identify what interval it is you are playing. The most valuable practice time is time spent exploring and in this column you have been given the equipment to explore far and wide. Take the challenge on with confidence and discover new things for yourself; it feels really good when you get there.

Chris Woods



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EXAMPLE 1

Standard tuning ♩ = 120

S-Gt

T	0	3	5	7	8	10	12
A	2	4	5	7	9	10	12
B							

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EXAMPLE 2

♩ = 120
S-Gt

mf

1 2

T
A
B

0 0 2 2 0 2 0 3 0 3 3 5 2 3 5

7 9 10 7 9 10 7 9 7 8 10 7 8 10 12 12 14 15 12 14 15 12 14 15 11 12 14 12 13 15 12

EXAMPLE 3

S-Gt

mf

T
A
B

2 3 5 7 8 10 12 2 4 5 7 9 11 12

EXAMPLE 4

S-Gt

mf

T
A
B

2 4 5 2 4 5 2 4 2 3 5 2 3 5 5 7 4 5 7 4 6 7 5 7 8 5 7 7 9 10 7 9 10 7 9 6 7 9 7 8 10 7 9 10 12 9 10 12 9 11 12 9 11 12 10 12 9 10

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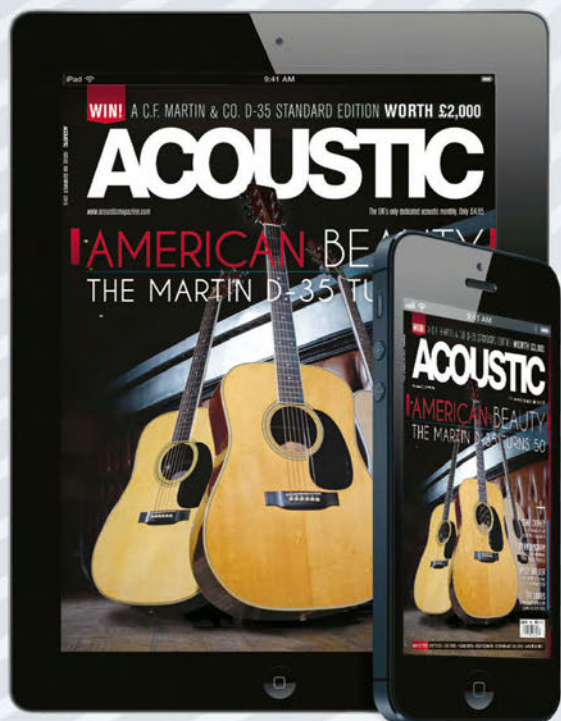
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LEGENDS

Buffy Sainte-Marie

WORDS: TERI SACCONI

Although singer-songwriter Buffy Sainte-Marie has cultivated an inspiring legacy since the dawn of her career in the mid-60s, the Canadian-born musician has never rested on her creative laurels. She's been an activist, actor and spokesperson for indigenous rights of native North American people. Her contributions as a songwriter to both popular and folk music make Buffy if not exactly a household name, a bona fide legend.

Sainte-Marie is in possession of a uniquely strong vibrato voice which might explain why she never had crossover appeal singing her own music, yet her voice is well-suited for the folk genre. Her classic songs such as 'Now That The Buffalo's Gone' and the controversial 'My Country 'Tis Of Thy People You're Dying' resonate as she was the first foremost recording artist to articulate the plight of her indigenous ancestors, an idea which blossomed in the ensuing years. The mid-60s were, of course, a time of cultural upheaval and real social change which is reflected in her music. Additionally, Buffy sang about other topical 60s issues. She was an anti-war activist (the visceral 'Universal Soldier') and modern romance ('Before It's Time For You To Go'). Although she became successful early on, Sainte-Marie has remained an outspoken artist, unafraid to speak her mind, backing it up by her actions for causes that she believes in.

Born in 1941 on a Cree Indian reservation in Saskatchewan, Canada, Buffy was given up for adoption (to white American parents related to her biological parents). She grew up in Massachusetts, USA.

During her teenage years as a way to protect herself from bullying and other anti-social



behaviour, Sainte-Marie "retreated into art like painting and music" and taught herself to play piano and guitar. During her late teens, Sainte-Marie duly visited her native tribe, learning their customs and teachings. After university, she began spending time in the bohemian folk neighbourhoods in Yorkville, Toronto, and Greenwich Village in New York City, eventually performing her songs in the clubs and coffee houses there. She was signed to folk record label Vanguard Records in 1964.

In a short period of time, she began touring both concert halls internationally and native reservations in the USA and Canada. Her debut album *It's My Way!* appeared in 1964 and it featured her elegantly crafted songwriting which she sustains to this day.

Sainte-Marie honed her performance skills and gained experience as a live singer. She also garnered a lauded reputation as a well-respected songwriter as many artists covered her material. In 1963, after a serious throat infection, Buffy became addicted to codeine and penned the song 'Cod'ine' in the aftermath. It is one of the few songs of the

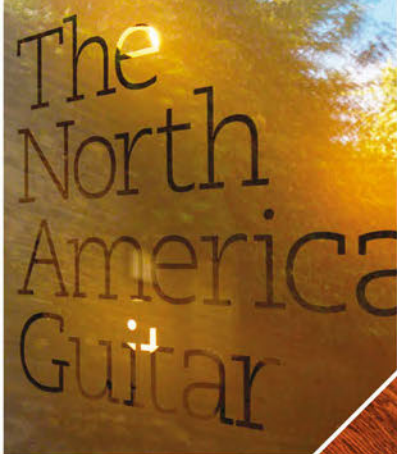
early 60s to reference the dangers of drugs. Many artists covered the classic tune including Donovan, Janis Joplin, the Charlatans, Quicksilver Messenger Service, Gram Parsons, Charles Brutus McClay, and the Barracudas.

Although she was a folk hero in 1969, Sainte-Marie uprooted to Nashville, Tennessee, to try to break into the country music scene. While there, she recorded with Chet Atkins. In the 70s, she made some rock albums including *Moonshot* with Neil Young's backing band Crazy Horse, did some television acting, and taped TV specials with Johnny Cash and Pete Seeger.

Although her musical fortunes were mixed after the late 60s, she seemed to relish the experimentation. She also began a long-running tenure on children's TV show *Sesame Street* in 1971. Buffy also wrote songs for films including the monster hit 'Up Where We Belong' for movie *An Officer And A Gentleman*, co-written with her former husband, producer Jack Nitzsche.

The 80s was a fallow period recording-wise for Sainte-Marie (as was the case for many 60s artists), but after a 15-year hiatus she finally released an album *Coincidence And Likely Stories* in 1992. It was another 16 years before her next release *Running For The Drum* which appeared in 2008 and was critically well-received.

In 2012, a Sainte-Marie biography entitled *It's My Way!* surfaced. In the spring of 2015, Buffy released a new album *Power In The Blood* which she recorded in Toronto. The album contains two covers – the title tune by Alabama 3 and UB40's 'Sing Our Own Song'. Although Sainte-Marie is now in her 70s, her passion for social awareness and music remains as vibrant as ever – something that was apparent on her recent promotional tour to support the album. ■



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